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THE Ottawa debate is proceeding, as we write, according to plan. No fresh arguments have been produced for or against the agreements and the tariffs which have been saddled on the country, and the majorities in the division lobbies are a foregone conclusion. The Prime Minister delivered a vigorous, not to say vociferous, speech on Tuesday, which stirred his Conservative supporters in the House to enthusiasm, but which will leave many who read it quite cold. He denied that the carrying of this great scheme of Protection was a violation of anybody's election pledges. He claimed that the Ottawa agreements would expand our trade, and declared that but for the "success" of the Ottawa Conference the World Economic Conference would have been impossible. These were comforting, if not altogether convincing, words. But his final and true observation, that tariffs were no cure for unemployment, was riling for the Beaverbrookish section of his followers.

* * *

The denunciation of the Anglo-Soviet agreement is, as we think, a thoroughly foolish business. But it was part of the unconscionable bargain that our delegates at Ottawa made with Mr. Bennett, and it evidently had to come. Foolish as it is, however, it need not be treated as another Arcos Raid and set all the alarm bells ringing. There is no reason why it should worsen the prospects of Anglo-Russian trade, if the Soviet Government keeps cool. The number of our anti-Bolshevik fanatics like the Duchess of Atholl is dwindling rapidly, and the number of Conservatives who share the sane view, expressed boldly and plainly the other day by Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, is growing apace. A substantial extension of trade is perfectly feasible with a modicum of common sense on both sides. The Russian dumping bogy has no terrors for the Government or for anyone else in this country who knows the facts. What we want is, while increasing our exports to Russia, to keep our imports from Russia within certain limits. But the Russians, as everyone knows, have been driven to a policy of excessive exportation for financial reasons—in plain words, by the necessity of finding cash on short term to pay for their capital imports. Why should we not help to solve the difficulty by extending the term of credit? There is no genuine fear of the Soviets' defaulting. And would it not be possible, in the new atmosphere thus created, to go further and get a settlement of the debt question over which we have wrangled for so long?

* * *

The deadlock caused by the German Government's refusal to attend the Disarmament Conference still persists. And the Four-Power meeting, which was to have found a way out, remains nothing but a forlorn hope. The French want it to be held at Geneva, and will not come to London. The Germans have no objection to London, but will not go to Geneva. Many

people with inside knowledge regret that this Four-Power project was ever raised by the British Government; negotiations were going on at Geneva which, it is believed, would have brought the Germans and the French together, and Mr. MacDonald's intervention only resulted in putting a spoke in the wheel. Tempers are now worse on all sides. The Germans' intransigence causes irritation here, whilst it confirms the worst fears of the French. The British policy—or lack of policy—is a source of suspicion and perplexity alike in France, Germany and elsewhere. Assuming that this initial difficulty is got over, the next will be M. Herriot's plan, which the Conference will have to face in earnest—far more earnestly than it faced the Hoover proposals in the summer. We may expect it to be a plan which in the name of security will demand more concessions to the French point of view than we have hitherto been ready to make. But will it also embody concessions on the French side—in plain words, will it be a genuine disarmament plan? If not, how is the German demand for equality to be satisfied? The rearming of Germany and a general competition in armaments is an answer that cannot be thought of.

* * *

Meanwhile the new truculence of the Germans has shown itself again in the struggle over the appointments of League officials. They have pushed a nominee of their own Government for election to one of the higher posts in the secretariat, and they have pressed for the dismissal of a Frenchman who has done admirable service at Geneva from the very beginning. Not only has this business wasted time and money by keeping the Assembly in session for several extra days; but what is more serious, it has meant a victory—partial at any rate—of nationalism over internationalism. It is of the first importance that the officials of the League should be a really international civil service. But the German Government has in effect claimed the right for itself and for any other Governments (and some other Governments have unfortunately been only too ready to support it) to dispose in its own interest of the appointments to the secretariat. It is a dangerous encroachment, and if the practice started by the Wilhelmstrasse is developed, it will have disastrous results.

* * *

It is evident, though not so generally realised as it ought to be, that the Manchurian situation has an important bearing on the Disarmament Conference. Japan in her present mood is adamant against any reduction of her armaments. If she persists in that determination, then the Americans will not reduce their navy, nor in consequence we ours, nor again in consequence the French their army. The best hope of a change of mood in Japan lies in the liquidation of the Manchurian adventure. Furthermore, the collapse of that adventure would mean the vindication of the Covenant, and that would be an important step in creating a belief in France that the League can ensure collective action against aggression. And thirdly, there is no doubt that the German hankering after rearmament has been strengthened by the spectacle of the League's impotence in the Far East and the conviction that the Covenant and the Locarno Pact are scraps of paper. A League success over Japan might do much to check the growing militarism in Germany.

* * *

The Belfast relief work strikers have won their point, or at any rate secured very substantial concessions, and have thus furnished another illustration of the principle that to them that make themselves a nuisance shall be given, while the patiently acquiescent have to be content with praises of their docility. Meanwhile, unrest in Great Britain continues to grow and to find expression in a rapidly increasing number of demonstrations, of which the latest and most spectacular took place in London at the beginning of the week. This was engineered by the National Unemployed Workers Movement, and had the open support of the Communists. The Government and the press have made the most of that, but they are very well aware that talk of agitators and the "hand of Moscow" will not get them very far. Agitators and Moscow do not create the conditions that drive men to despair and anger; they only take advantage of them. The Prime Minister has realised that something more is needed than police measures and homilies to the unemployed and the Labour Party. On Wednesday he promised an announcement with the least possible delay of the measures which the Government propose to take for the reform of the means test.

* * *

We may expect, therefore, a revised set of regulations controlling the operation of the means test, with the object of introducing a much greater degree of uniformity into its administration in different areas. That a part of the present widespread unrest arises from the inequalities in the working of the test between area and area is obvious; and to this extent the change of policy is to the good. But it has still to be seen whether greater uniformity is to be achieved by scaling up or by scaling down. It is probable that one result will be to worsen the conditions in those areas where Labour dominates the Public Assistance Committees; but even apart from these areas there are at present very wide differences of practice. It is surely monstrous that a man who owns his home should be compelled to sell it up, and live on the proceeds, before becoming eligible for public assistance. But if the man who owns his home is to be allowed to keep it, what of the man who instead of buying a house has put his savings somewhere else? The problem presents immense difficulties. And though some improvement may be effected by more uniformity of administration, we do not believe it will be solved by tinkering with the machinery.

* * *

Meanwhile, there are people who for party purposes are prepared to defend the present means test, and to defend it by the most unscrupulous arguments. In an article in the *Times* last Wednesday, on the subject of the forthcoming borough elections, mention was made of a leaflet issued by the London Municipal Society and National Union of Ratepayers' Associations, which "brings the issue into *undistorted perspective*" (our italics). "It is submitted," we read, "that the test is the means test which was laid down by Mr. George Lansbury and Mrs. Sidney Webb in 1909 in the Minority Report of the Poor Law." If that means anything,

it means that the Minority Report proposed that the local poor law authorities should investigate the financial circumstances of the unemployed, or some of them, and decide what benefit or payment they should receive from the State. The facts are as follows. The Minority Report was issued in 1909, and there was no State unemployment insurance system till 1911. The Minority Report was opposed to a State unemployment insurance system. The Minority Report proposed the abolition of the Poor Law, and the transference of all dealings with the able-bodied unemployed from the local authorities to a national authority. The Minority Report did not recommend any inquiry whatever by the national authority into the financial circumstances of the unemployed. And the only reference to a test that it contained was "a medical examination and a test of the faculties" of the residuum of unemployed not provided for by an elaborate series of measures—"in order to discover in what way they could be improved by training." Only to prevent overlapping in the case of "home aliment" an official known as the Registrar of Public Assistance would have powers of inquiry, but nothing specific is laid down about this. What faintest hint of the means test of to-day is there in all this?

* * *

On Monday of this week a letter appeared in the *Times* over the signatures of Professors Macgregor and Pigou, Mr. Keynes, Sir Arthur Salter and Sir Josiah Stamp—truly a formidable team. Their purpose was to urge the point—as it seems to us, the indisputably valid point—that in the present depression mere abstention from consumption, so far from being a patriotic duty, is a positive cause of increased distress. They went on to urge that this applied to public as well as private abstention, so that the mere refusal of the State or local authorities to spend money on desirable public works would have results as bad as the refusal of individuals to buy up to the limits of their resources. On the principle that, whenever any economist offers an opinion, there must be always another economist to disagree with him, this letter was promptly answered by Professors Gregory, von Hayek, Plant and Robbins, all of the London School of Economics—that latest home of lost causes and Victorian loyalties. According to these dissenters, what is admittedly true of private spending does not apply to public spending, because the latter is likely to force up interest rates and so hinder industrial revival. But in face of the large mass of resources which is now lying idle, neither spent nor invested, is any at all probable extension of public spending likely to have an appreciable effect on interest rates? And if private savers refuse to invest through lack of confidence, on what economic principle is the State to refrain from entering the investment market in order to stimulate production and set enterprise moving again? Surely Professor Gregory and his colleagues are straining at a theoretical point, and forgetting the practical situation.

* * *

Mr. Arthur Henderson's decision to resign his leadership of the Labour Party was not unexpected. It was an anomalous position for the party to have two leaders, one in Parliament and one outside, and it is believed that Mr. Henderson would be in no hurry to return to the House of Commons at present, even if an opportunity were to occur. For almost a generation he has been the organiser of the party's forces in the country, and the very real and effective head of the party machine. He rightly regards this work as peculiarly his own. He cannot carry both this burden and that of effective leadership, much as his health has improved during the last few months, and accordingly Mr. Lansbury, who is already leader of the party in the House, now becomes leader without qualification of the party as a whole. While, however, Mr. Henderson is now to concentrate on the work of organisation, no one can say how soon he will be able to take that much needed task in hand, since no one knows how long the Disarmament Conference will last.

* * *

That gallant champion of liberty, Mr. A. P. Herbert, has devoted nearly two columns of the *Evening Standard* to ridiculing our remarks about D.O.R.A. and shop-assistants. The article appears too late for us to offer more than a modest comment in this week's issue. To read Mr. Herbert is invariably a pleasure, since no one can make a point more neatly where there is a point to make. But has Mr. Herbert got a point this time? Is he not in fact really involved in a number of confused issues which in the dashing course of his eager championship he has never stayed to sort out? Take one example. In order to prove that the regulations which he dislikes are not, as we said, imposed in the interests of shop-assistants, Mr. Herbert quotes the example of a chemist's shop which is open at night for the sale of "medicated" soap but not of ordinary soap. Mr. Herbert asks how it profits the assistant that "he may sell senna pods but not soap." The answer, we presume, is that if chemists can sell soap and other non-chemical goods late at night, then every chemist's shop will become, as it already is in the United States, a dry-goods store, and every grocer who is not allowed to keep his shop open late at night will have an unanswerable grievance. Therefore the working conditions of thousands of grocer's assistants are threatened by Mr. Herbert's demand to be allowed to buy unmedicated soap. At one moment Mr. Herbert lapses into thinking. He demands, he says, that the "reasonable convenience" of consumers should be the first consideration, and admits secondly that "we must provide such safeguards as will ensure proper hours and conditions of work and leisure for those engaged in the industry, whether by double shifts or otherwise." Well, we ask nothing better than to see Mr. Herbert on a committee confronted with the problem of what constitutes "reasonable convenience," what limitations are necessary for ensuring proper hours and conditions, and what means can be found for getting rid of anomalies. Nothing will please us more than to see the last of D.O.R.A.—if D.O.R.A. means unnecessary restrictions and prudish survivals. If that is the real object of this anti-D.O.R.A. campaign, we will gladly rally to its support. But we have not yet seen the evidence of any such intention. The indiscriminate lumping together of drink, D.O.R.A., and shop regulations as one simple issue of "liberty" suggests that Mr. Herbert's pen is being used to support a stunt.

THE LONG VIEW OF UNEMPLOYMENT

DECENT people dislike the thought that their neighbours are hungry. Therefore they are quite nice to Mr. Lansbury when he writes to the *Times* to say that it is un-Christian as well as absurd to make five people live on rather less than 30s. a week because capitalists have over-produced and cannot make a profit out of the world's super-abundance. And when hunger and a sense of injustice drive the unemployed into demonstrations and collisions with the police even the Government begins to take their condition seriously. For months past this journal has been drawing attention to the injustices of the Means Test as now administered, and we are glad if the Government is at length prepared to overhaul the whole system of unemployment relief. But though a better administration of relief would mean less suffering, it cannot touch the major problem of unemployment. That for the moment no one appears to be discussing.

Now, directly we turn to that problem, the striking fact is that no one any longer believes in any of the stock remedies. The Liberal-Labour policy of relief works was never at best more than a temporary remedy —though that seems an insufficient reason for increasing unemployment, as the National Government has done, by encouraging local authorities to cut down their expenditure on desirable public work. As for tariffs, no responsible people to-day regard them as a remedy for unemployment. Only a mind like Sir Henry Page-Croft's can believe that to block up the channels through which trade flows can in the long run lead to more trade or more employment. Indeed, after a year at the head of a Government which has transformed Great Britain into a protectionist country, Mr. MacDonald's plea is not that tariffs are valuable, but that he hopes to see them reduced at the World Economic Conference. If, in spite of permitting his hands to be tied at Ottawa, he succeeds at that Conference in undoing some of the mischief he has been aiding and abetting, we shall be glad; if, in addition, he can bring a little more sense into the international currency system we shall be still better pleased. But, even so, we are all well aware that the unemployed will still be walking the streets. For unemployment is the result not only of currency muddles, trade dislocations and tariff barriers, but also of technological improvement.

The simple fact is that each improvement in the technique of production, each miracle of new machinery whether on the land or in industry, means a smaller demand for labour. Because we have no rational means of distribution, because we regulate production, not according to real demand, but according to the individual capitalist's chance of making a profit, we release this labour without supplying its needs. We call these released workmen "unemployed" because they have leisure without the means of enjoying it. The unemployed who have the means and the education to find occupations which do not add to the material wealth of the world, we call the leisured class.

The achievement of man's ambition to do less work combined with a disorganisation so ludicrous that we have to treat this new leisure as a disease to be cured, constitutes an anomaly of such a glaring character that the most orthodox persons are shaken out of their traditional beliefs. Because of the outrageous paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, we find old Socialist cries and new currency schemes, both intelligent and foolish, taken up in the least likely quarters. Only this week an experienced administrator and a dyed-in-the-wool Conservative, declared that he saw no solution for our problems except in the immediate enforcement of a five-hour day for everyone—an idea which used only to be put forward by the wild men of the I.L.P. The notion of sharing out the work and the pay seems sensible, but it needs only a very cursory examination to see that it is a remedy that could only be adopted within the structure of a planned economy. It is not surprising, therefore, to find conservative-minded men who have no other sympathy with the aspirations of the rulers of Soviet Russia, asking whether there is not something to learn from a country which, whatever its own troubles, claims in theory at least to have solved this problem of unemployment and leisure.

For in Russia an attempt is being made to co-ordinate production and distribution, and if the system ever works efficiently, there is no reason why either over-production or unemployment should occur there. The tap can be turned on first here and then there as needs appear and are satisfied, and, as the standard of living rises with improved production, it should be possible to shorten hours for everyone, to produce more luxuries, and to enable every man and woman to enjoy all those spiritual as well as material good things which have hitherto been the monopoly of a few.

Now this theory—and we are discussing the theory and not the progress of this system in Russia to-day—naturally excites "planners" in the capitalist world. They talk of planning British economic life sometimes without realising that capitalism which depends on individual profits cannot by its very nature plan for the public good. In a capitalist system it may at any time be to the interest of the individual capitalist, but not to the community, to restrict production for the sake of higher profits. Secondly, those who wish to plan must face the fact that planning cannot be done gradually and in piecemeal fashion. The vital controls necessary for planning and reorganising inter-related industries must be grasped simultaneously. It is the realisation of this last fact that has moved the Labour Party to so vehement a repudiation of "gradualism." It is not enough to nationalise one industry after another: planning involves seizing the power to force reorganisation upon a number of industries at the same time. Therefore the technical and apparently unrealistic question, now being debated in our correspondence columns, of whether the Labour Party ought or ought not to put the nationalisation of the Joint Stock Banks on its programme is vital to the whole problem. The question whether it is good or bad electoral tactics we can leave to the Labour Party itself to discuss: the problem whether any valuable reorganisation of society can be achieved through the socialisation of the Bank of England alone, or whether the Joint Stock Banks must also be controlled if any successful reorganisation of society is to take place, is one which concerns everyone and which appears to us

to need far more detailed and competent examination than the leaders of the Labour Party as yet appear to have bestowed upon it.

This is not a question for any one Party. Logic forces us to the conclusion that if we are ever to enjoy the advantages that the new technique of production offers us, we must do two things. First, we must discover in far greater detail than has yet been attempted what a Socialist plan for British industry would involve, what the real centres of control are, and what industries must first be brought within its scope. Such an inquiry, if it is to have any reality, must include a plan for international trade as well as for the organisation of the home market. Secondly, if our Socialist plan is to be anything else than another addition to the throw-outs of the second-hand bookstalls, it must be accompanied by a no less realistic and detailed examination of the tactics necessary for gaining the power to carry out such a plan. The second problem, therefore, is the technique of what Mr. Wells has called "The Conquest of Power." It would be idle to pretend that so great a change could be accomplished without an arduous and perhaps dangerous struggle. But since the unemployed will not tamely submit to the degradation to which capitalism condemns them, the danger of attempting a socialist plan is less than the risk of drift.

AN IRISH REPUBLIC?

ONE may doubt whether any country has ever felt itself more right than this country feels to-day in its attitude to Mr. De Valera. We are legally in the right because we are keeping to the Treaty. We are morally in the right because the majority of Southern Ireland thought the Treaty a just one. For ten years we have had a clean record and a clear conscience in regard to our treatment of that unrestful country.

And yet everything has gone wrong. There is a section of Ireland whose mind is not accessible to mere reason or blunt common sense. And Mr. De Valera, with his upside-down logic and his mediaeval obscurantism, is by no means an accidental and isolated phenomenon; he typifies the obstinately sentimental side of her character which has for the moment gained the ascendancy. It is easy enough to show that Mr. De Valera, from every ordinary standpoint of common sense or reason, is in the wrong. It is tempting to the spirit of irony to pour ridicule on his methods and expose the eccentricity of his stubbornness. But that does not get us a yard nearer the goal we all wish for—that of living in friendliness with a nation whose interests are identical with our own, against which we have no ill-will, and which has no fundamental ill-will against us. A state of economic war, harmful to England, ruinous to Ireland, exists between these two friendly countries. Cherishing her grievance, Mr. De Valera's Ireland seems prepared to suffer to the last extremity before she will yield the merest trifle.

Nor can we count upon a speedy resumption of the rule of Mr. Cosgrave and of reason. Mr. De Valera has successfully hoisted the standard of sentiment, and the sensitive heart of Ireland is touched in its tenderest part. He has appealed to suffering, and that heart moves in response to suffering. It would be idle to assume that because Southern Ireland may be called upon to endure grievous hardship this winter by reason of the tariff war that that will make her more inclined to submission. It is as likely to induce in her the spirit of war. It is well that we should be reasonable. But there are times when it is well to be more than reasonable.

The quarrel is not without its absurd side. But in any quarrel the wise man does what he can to get over the absurdities; he asks whether behind the camouflage of absurdities there is not some real sense of grievance, a grievance, perhaps, without just cause, yet rankling. The absurdities in this case are the Annuities, the Oath, the Governor-Generalship—all of them the camouflage about which Mr. De Valera has been disputing, but about which he does not care a button, since he has something much more serious at heart which he is unwilling (having no mandate at the last election) even to mention just now. He and the British Ministers, in all the negotiations that have taken place, have been walking round and round the one problem that he minds about, talking about anything else in preference. They avoided the one vital question, prior to and governing the rest: was Ireland, or was she not, to be a republic?

Why avoid this question, the only one that interests Mr. De Valera? He wants, simply, a republic. He is a republican first and foremost. His supporters are republicans. Nothing can be offered them which will give them any permanent gratification unless it leads them towards that goal. Why should not our Ministers practise a little psycho-analysis and drag this problem from its deep lair out into the open to be grappled with?

Now, does Ireland, in her heart of hearts, want an independent republic, or is she merely nursing a sense of grievance, the feeling that she is forbidden by the Treaty to have a republic? Supposing we were ready to offer—not to Mr. De Valera, but to Southern Ireland, expressing her desire unmistakably at the polls—the choice between her present position and a republic, with all that that implies of separation from the Empire. Would she, confronted with such a choice, choose a republic, or would the possession of the full power of choice exorcise the devil of separatism? And suppose, again, that the Free State, with such full knowledge of the conditions, should do what most of us think unlikely—suppose she should, in such circumstances, give an unmistakable mandate in favour of the republic, could we, being what we are and what we stand for in the world, resist such a demand? Would it be worth while resisting it? Would it be consistent with the democratic principles by which we exist? It is worth remembering that if Ireland does not have the opportunity to make that choice in an atmosphere of good will she will find an opportunity herself in an atmosphere of ill will.

It is dangerous to leave the matter undiscussed and unclarified, for Mr. De Valera will not rest where he is, and, at any time, by playing on the ill will which disputes arouse, he may secure his Parliamentary majority.

In that case, if he came back to power with a mandate for his republican policy, it would be a mandate to act, not with us, but against us—to stop at nothing in opposition to Britain, and in defiance of the Treaty, to secure his end. An Ireland inflamed by the cry that it was still "under duress" from Britain would be face to face with a Britain angry at the threatened scrapping of the Treaty. That is a dangerous situation which ought not to be allowed to arise. But sooner or later it will arise unless we anticipate it.

Now, it is declared in the Constitution of the Irish Free State, as embodied in the Act of 1922, that the power of government in Ireland is derived from the people, in accordance with the Constitution. It would be a direct answer to what is in Mr. De Valera's mind, and at the same time an amicable challenge, if we assured him that we would accept the spirit as well as the letter of that declaration, that we concede Ireland's claim to the fullest possible self-determination.

That would not mean that we proceed forthwith to grant Mr. De Valera his republic. His will has by no means yet been shown to be the will of Ireland. In the last General Election he neither asked nor obtained a mandate to over-

throw the Treaty and establish a republic. No such mandate exists, and until it does the republicans have no claim.

I suggest that the best way to answer Mr. De Valera, and to check the mischief which he is doing in his country, would be to make a declaration without delay—and have it confirmed by Parliament—that if the Government of the Irish Free State secured an unmistakable mandate from the people for the severance of the connection with Great Britain and the Empire, and for the setting-up of a republic, we would create no obstacle.

The meaning of this declaration would have to be made quite clear. It would not be possible for the Free State both to eat her cake and have it. If she voted for a republic, that would involve separation from Great Britain and withdrawal from the British Empire. She would not, therefore, be able to attend Imperial conferences, nor would her citizens enjoy the privilege of subjects of the British Crown. She could not expect the tariff preferences which are given to the Dominions. Nor would it follow that Britain would abandon naval control over certain ports, as now exercised under the provisions of the Treaty. Such control need not affect the sovereignty of Southern Ireland any more than the retention of Gibraltar affects Spain.

No doubt there is a risk that the Irish Free State might give Mr. De Valera this mandate. It is a risk which is worth taking. For if Southern Ireland stubbornly persisted in a desire to separate from this country, it would not be to our interest to try to compel her to remain with us. The day when compulsion of that sort can be exercised is gone; and a policy of compulsion would be contrary to everything for which Great Britain stands. It would be sensible statesmanship to say to Southern Ireland clearly: "You cannot be both with us and not with us. If you stay with us, enjoying your present Dominion freedom, that is what we should like. But if you prefer to leave us, it is for you to decide. We will not lift a finger to keep you in the Empire against your will. Make your choice—Mr. De Valera and isolation or Mr. Cosgrave and the Empire. We will abide by it."

That, I believe, is a declaration which the Irish friends of Great Britain would welcome. It would define the issues and clear the air for realities. R. A. SCOTT-JAMES.

"HOUSE DISTRESS IN THAT ENORMOUS WEN"

IN spite of the 1½ million small houses that have been built since the war, there is still a shortage of accommodation for the poorer paid workers and overcrowding shows no signs of improvement. Even the representatives of the Property Owners' Association, the Land Agents' Society, and the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, interested as they are in the landlord's point of view, when appearing before the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Rent Restriction Acts, agreed with the representatives of the tenants' interests that there was a shortage, and that "decontrol" of houses in the lowest categories must be gradual. The "filtering-up" process of tenants from one type of house to another, which it was hoped the provision of new houses would encourage, has not taken place; and the "decontrolling" provisions of the 1923 Rent Restriction Act have had the effect of immobilising working-class tenants through fear of higher rents and loss of security of tenure.

In London, cheap accommodation is especially scarce and overcrowded conditions prevalent. The Great Wen is still a unique problem as it was in 1832 when Cobbett, writing from the village of Kensington, exclaimed at the unhealthiness of its size. Probably no other place possesses such a vast acreage of large houses originally designed for single families, but now divided up into one- and two-roomed dwellings, no structural alteration for the change having been made. The number of these is increasing and presents one of the most intractable problems of slum life. Also the scandal of the condemned but inhabited basement is still with us. The major factors in increasing London's housing difficulties have been the redevelopment of central London, which has meant demolition on an extensive scale, and "decontrol" of higher rented properties. Both of these processes have been considerably expedited in the last few years. There has been, in addition, the large immigration of the unemployed from Wales and the industrial North and Midlands.

The national financial crisis has, of course, made matters worse. The past winter has shown that high rents have aggravated the general poverty and distress and made the cuts in unemployment benefit over some districts in London more drastic than was the intention of Parliament. The increase in number of children receiving free meals in the elementary schools under the L.C.C. is of significance in this connection. Before a child is put on the feeding list the family income is reviewed by the appropriate committee, rent being the item which determines the available surplus for food. Following is a table (taken from the Agenda of the Education Committee of the L.C.C.) contrasting the numbers fed in March, 1931 and March, 1932:

Week Ended	No. of Children Receiving Meals Free of Cost 1931.	1932.
4th March	3,845	4,909
11th March	3,851	4,950
18th March	3,831	5,000
25th March	3,814	4,876

Interesting, too, is the record of one school of 800 pupils in a West End district:

	No. of Children Fed.	No. of Families from which Children Drawn.*
April, 1931	5	4
May, 1931	5	3
June, 1931	2	2
July, 1931	1	1
September, 1931	0	0
October, 1931	11	4
November, 1931	15	6
December, 1931	18	8
January, 1932	21	9
February, 1932	34	14
March, 1932	40	17
April, 1932	33	14
May, 1932	37	20

(* This column has been set out in order to show the number of family budgets sufficiently low to require school feeding.)

These are some typical family budgets from a West London district. With the exception of D, the children do not receive food at school.

A.	4 Children.	Unemployment pay	31/3
		Rent for two rooms	15/6
B.	3 Children.	Unemployment pay	29/3
		Rent	17/–
C.	Widow, 4 children, no pension.	Public Assistance Committee gives food and ..	21/–
		Rent for 2 rooms	15/6
D.	5 Children.	Unemployment pay	31/3
		Rent for 2 rooms	17/6
E.	Widowed suddenly, pension delayed and difficult to get. Three children. In meantime, P.A.C. gives in money		10/–
	In food		10/–
	Is housed in two damp rooms for which she pays		£1
	Top of house is verminous and she dare not move to cheaper rooms; heavily in arrears.		

If we are to have new legislation on rent control in the autumn session the matter must come up before Parliament either in an Expiring Laws Continuance or in a new Bill: presumably the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee will be followed. The main proposal made for England and Wales was the classification of houses in three divisions:

Class A houses. Those over £45 rateable value but under £105 (this is the upward limit of value to which the Rent Restriction Acts apply) in London, £35 but under £78 elsewhere, to be "decon

trolled" entirely and come right out of the Acts—the shortage in this type of house having been overtaken.

Class B houses. Those over £20 rateable value but under £45 in London, and over £13 but less than £35 elsewhere, to be subject to the process of "decontrol" by vacant possession established by the 1923 Act.

Class C houses. Those below the "compounding limits" *i.e.*, the limits of rateable value below which a local authority can require owners of houses to be liable for the rates on the house, that is below £20 in London, £13 or under elsewhere, *are to cease to be subject to "decontrol" under the 1923 Act.* By these means it is hoped that tenants of small working-class houses will have security of tenure and a continuance of low rent.

But these proposals, good though they are, do not help the London difficulty of the large house with innumerable sub-tenancies, the rent of which usually comes above the £45 limit; nor does it help the provincial towns where residential districts have become industrialised of late years and are now inhabited by a working population. Some additional means of classification other than rateable value must be found as the test of where control of some sort is still necessary.

Neither the suggestion of Rent Courts nor that of a system of registration of sub-letting with the local authorities found favour with the Inter-Departmental Committee. It was thought, on the one hand, as the County Courts have done their work admirably and now have a long experience and knowledge of the Rent Restriction Acts, it would be unwise to set up new and untried courts. On the other, that registration would involve enormous work for the local authorities and cause public resentment by advertising the poverty of tenants who were obliged to sublet. The Report does, however, make a recommendation for conciliation boards to act as "centres of information and advice . . . local authorities to be empowered to appoint (such) committees for the purpose of giving advice on questions arising under the Acts." This is a most valuable suggestion and would do much to smooth the path for tenants of Class C houses and those of Class B houses which remain controlled—especially with regard to apportionment of rent in sub-tenancies, cases of extortionate rent, dilapidations, and the regulation of bogus "furnished" rents (*i.e.*, the charging of a furnished rent for rooms where the furniture is so scanty and of such doubtful utility as not to constitute "furnished" rooms in the generally accepted sense). Ignorance of legal rights and fear of the landlord hitherto have always been insuperable difficulties in the fair working of the Acts, except in those districts where some form of unofficial tenant's advisory body has existed. If statutory committees of this sort were set up it would be a great boon to working-class tenants generally.

But could not the proposal be extended farther than this? Surely the idea of conciliation boards points a way out of the more difficult problem of the large house which is responsible for so much of London's slumdom. There are in every locality many local associations in close touch with various aspects of the housing problem, both from the tenant's and from the landlord's point of view, who could, in a representative capacity, serve on these advisory committees and conciliation boards and would be well fitted to watch and advise upon rents and apportionment of rents of sub-tenancies. In effect, it would be a form of Whitley Council applied to the business of house property. This would supply just that kind of limited control, indicated above, as so vitally necessary for the houses above £45 rateable value.

In view of the slowing up of building programmes by the L.C.C. and the Borough Councils, through the necessities of economy and the cuts in unemployment benefit, and simultaneously with these the rapid rate of "decontrol" all over London with its consequent rise of rent, it is urgent before this winter's miseries are faced that early in the coming session some really effective measure should be taken to deal with rents in the metropolis and other places where analogous conditions exist.

B. B.

A LONDON DIARY

I SHOULD like to have been present at the Irish "negotiations" and have seen the faces of Mr. Thomas and Sir John Simon when Mr. De Valera explained that England owed Ireland £400,000,000. I wish I knew what caustic "illustrations" were put to Mr. De Valera—perhaps the accumulated compound interest owing to us from France for the damage done by William the Conqueror, or by the Italians for the exploits of Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. I know well from conversation with Mr. De Valera just how his mind harps on history. He is a man who never writes off a debt, however fantastic. The Government deserves a good mark in the circumstances for discussing the position at all, but I am still strongly of the opinion that a grave blunder was made in refusing Mr. De Valera the right to nominate a non-member of the Empire for the proposed Board of Arbitration. Mr. Thomas talked with some contempt in the House of Commons of Mr. De Valera's incomprehensible notion of making Ireland an Associated Republic within the Empire. The proposal need not have surprised Mr. Thomas, for on that point, if on no other, Mr. De Valera has been consistent since the days of the Black and Tans. It would add an interesting new variety to the complex of assorted constitutions which now exist within the British Commonwealth. Mr. De Valera's idea of an Irish republic acknowledging George V sounds Irish, but seems to me a thoroughly English compromise.

* * *

The only person, so far as I know, who ever really flummoxed Mr. De Valera was Mr. Lloyd George more than ten years ago. I have heard Mr. Tom Jones, who was then Cabinet Secretary, tell the whole story with delicious humour. It has now been told in print—in the last volume of Mr. Winston Churchill's *World Crisis*. Mr. De Valera, heralded by his "Ambassador," Mr. O'Brien, produced a document in the Irish language headed "Sàr Stat"—Free State. It contained, he said, the constitution which he demanded as President of the Irish Republic. Mr. Lloyd George would have nothing to do with the English translation, but asked Mr. De Valera what was the Irish word for "republic." Mr. De Valera, taken aback, discussed this problem of the Irish language with Mr. O'Brien, and, as neither of them knew much Irish, they talked *English*. Meanwhile Mr. Lloyd George carried on a conversation with Mr. Tom Jones in *Welsh*. When Mr. De Valera finally had to say that the Irish word for "republic" was the same as that for "Free State," Mr. Lloyd George said "Yes, Mr. De Valera, that's just what I thought. You have no word for republic in Irish any more than we have in Wales. The truth is that *we Celts* never have been republicans, have we?" Mr. De Valera, however, got some of his own back in the conversation that ensued. After three hours, Mr. Lloyd George came out of the room and whispered "We have just got to Cromwell," which is where Mr. De Valera still is.

* * *

Next week Italy celebrates the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome. A friend just returned from several months in Italy describes the situation in these words: A fact which, however unpleasant, deserves greater attention from the English progressive press is the intense Chauvinistic feeling now prevalent in Italy. In a recent speech in Eritrea the King frankly stated that it was the Italian determination to build up a great African empire, if need be at the expense of degenerate nations—in other words to take Tunisia from the French. The Government is continually pressing the Italian population to further procreation, and has already inflamed anti-French feeling to the most alarming temperature. The Italian pleas for disarmament are undoubtedly sincere, for the principal obstacle to their imperialist aims is the strength of French arms. Doubtless the Duce knows that an immediate war with France would be disastrous, but the majority of his followers have no such

doubts. I asked one of them if he had been to Paris, and he answered, "No, but we are going to send our guns there!" The Italians have been taught to believe that they were chiefly responsible for the Allied victory in the war, and feel scarcely less aggrieved with the Treaty of Versailles than the Germans and Hungarians. Newspapers, placards, and speeches incessantly assure them of their superiority to other peoples, and they seem to lack that irony about themselves which so often tempers the national conceit of the English and French. There is a story, *ben trovato se non e vero*, that the Italian Staff during the war was distressed that there was no name for the Italian soldier corresponding to the French *poilu* and the British Tommy. After long deliberation it was announced that henceforward the gallant Italian should be known as *Il Terribile*.

* * *

Another deplorable feature of the Fascist regime is its interference with the liberty of thought and speech in the universities. That interference is, of course, only a part of the general suppression, but is particularly mischievous in that it restricts and distorts the pursuit of knowledge. Nobody supposed that the dictatorship in Italy, any more than in Russia, would allow university teachers to be active centres of sedition. But zeal and fear have driven it to lengths that Englishmen, at least, find not only repugnant but stupid. The oath of loyalty to the regime which is imposed on professors is a comparatively small evil. Many swear it from motives of prudence and are not bothered by it, since they have no intention of attacking, or even criticising, the regime. What is more serious is the pressure to force university teachers into membership of the Fascist Party, to require from them not merely acquiescence but active propaganda. This tyranny may not destroy all advance in scientific research, in pure literature, and in other fields which are not too closely connected with current politics and economics. But it is a system which has bred suspicion, delation and hypocrisy, and which heavily offsets the material blessings that Fascism has certainly conferred on Italy.

* * *

In several recent conversations with policemen I have been surprised at the strength of their feeling that they are being badly treated. "Take my case," said a young unmarried officer, "the actual cut in my pay when you include the docking of allowances of one kind and another is 19s. a week. I used to get £4 3s. and I now get £3 4s. And do you know that we have to pay income tax on the old rate of pay? Is that fair? Another thing that bothers us is that more men are taken on all the time at 55s., which undermines our position. The worst thing is that we are not allowed to meet at all, not even in small groups in plain clothes, to discuss our grievances. There is a committee to which we send representatives, but they dare not say much with their superior officers there. They can't put up any fight. I'm not thinking of a strike, but if we were even to hint at going slow on the job or anything of that sort by way of protest we should be punished for insubordination at once, which means having six weeks' pay docked. They have got us all ways: the elder men dare not complain for fear of losing their pensions, and the younger men are told that they are better off anyway than the new 55s. men. But the worst thing is that we are not allowed to have a meeting. They've got us down there," he concludes, with a dramatic gesture of his thumb towards the ground.

* * *

The discussion in the *Times* about whether it is more patriotic to save or to spend reminds me of the remarks of a very conscientious Cambridge Don of my acquaintance some little time ago. He was, he said, seriously troubled about unemployment. He felt that everyone ought to do his bit towards alleviating it. He had thought of three things he could do. He was having his rooms redecorated; he was having his bed lengthened by a foot as it was at present uncomfortably short; thirdly, he was having a silver egg cup made for use at breakfast time because Cambridge eggs were unusually large. He added, however, that he knew "*this was only tinkering with the problem.*"

CRITIC.

INTERFERENCE

I WAS present in spirit at the meeting held in the Albert Hall on Wednesday to protest against D.O.R.A. Even if those who organised the meeting succeed in their object of abolishing D.O.R.A., however, I am afraid that no one with the gift of prophetic insight into the future can look on this as a final defeat of the spirit of interference for which D.O.R.A. stands. I myself am unfortunate enough to be endowed with this prophetic spirit, and, with its help, I recently visited a police court in the year 1982. And this is what I saw.

The first man to appear in the dock was charged with having, contrary to the regulations of the Act for the Enforcement of Public Decency, worn a university costume while bathing on the Brighton beach. A policeman gave evidence that the accused had come to the beach from his hotel in a long overcoat, and that, before anyone could prevent him, had rushed into the sea in a costume reaching to his shoulders, causing consternation among a number of women who happened to be bathing there. One young woman had struck out at him with a pair of water-wings, and the others had gathered round him in a menacing manner. If the constable had not arrested the accused nothing could have prevented a breach of the peace.

"Dear, dear," said the magistrate, "nothing like this has happened in Brighton for nearly fifty years. I remember the last man who appeared on the Brighton beach even in a bathing slip was buried up to his neck in the shingle by a party of indignant nudists. I do not defend this violence, but a robust public opinion finds its own way of expressing itself. But had the accused no excuse to offer for his behaviour?" "He said he was pigeon-chested, your worship." "Pigeon-chested?" repeated the magistrate. "I confess I have every sympathy with human frailty, but a pigeon chest is no excuse for indecency. Rightly or wrongly, our Government, carrying out the wishes of all that is most respectable in the community, has decided that the wearing of costumes while bathing is an offence against decency which none but the prurient-minded can approve of. If such things were permitted Brighton would fall into disrepute, and fathers of families would no longer bring their children to a resort where spectacles of this kind would meet their eyes on the beach. British morals must be safeguarded, and a single bathing costume, if it were overlooked, might well prove to be the thin end of a very dangerous wedge. When next you think of wearing a bathing costume in the presence of the young and innocent, prisoner, remember the old and admirable saying, 'Decency forbids.' Because of your pigeon chest, I do not propose to punish you severely. Twenty shillings or seven days."

The next man to appear in the dock was a sturdy little fellow with pugnacious blue eyes and bristling hair, who looked as if he would like to fight the magistrate and, indeed, all the policemen in the court. A constable, giving evidence, said: "I was on plain-clothes duty in the vicinity of Gerrard Street about 6.30 on Sunday evening, the 24th of January, when I noticed a number of men behaving in a suspicious manner. They kept slipping down an entry in ones and twos and disappearing. I kept my eye on the prisoner and followed him at a distance till he came to a closed door. He knocked three times, and somebody opened a grating in the door and asked 'Who's there?' The prisoner replied 'Wandering sheep.' The door opened and the prisoner went in. I waited a few minutes and then gave three knocks on

the door. The voice through the grating asked 'Who's there?' I replied 'Wandering sheep.'" "What on earth did that mean?" asked the magistrate. "I found out afterwards," said the constable, "from a printed sheet that was put in my hands upstairs. It's a quotation from a seditious poem that begins

> I was a wandering sheep,
> I did not love the fold

Would your worship care to look at the sheet?" The sheet was passed to the magistrate, whose strong face blanched with horror as he read. "Good gracious!" he exclaimed, "the name of God appears practically in every fourth line. But tell me what happened after you got upstairs?" "I found the prisoner standing, very excited-looking, on a platform and inviting everybody to join him in singing what he called a hymn that began something like 'Forward Christian Soldiers!'" "And"—with a smile—"did you join in the singing, constable?" "I couldn't help it your worship. I got carried away." "You mean," said the magistrate, "that there was a definitely orgiastic tone about the gathering?" "If that meeting wasn't an orgy," said the policeman, "I never hope to see one." The magistrate paused. "And did you gather," he asked, "what the whole thing was about?" "Well," said the policeman, scratching his head, "the prisoner shut his eyes and turned his face up to the ceiling and asked for help." "Help against what? Against the Government?" "That was my suspicion, your worship." "And did you hear anything actually subversive said?" "To tell you the truth, your worship, I couldn't make head or tail of what the prisoner was talking about, but I heard him saying that they must all pledge their loyalty to some kingdom or other called Heaven." "And no doubt, the forbidden name of God was mentioned?" "Mentioned?" exclaimed the policeman, "it was all over the shop." "I will not trouble to call further evidence," said the magistrate, "or to hear the defence of the accused. But, before passing sentence, I should like to know whether the police have discovered any facts about him that would justify me in taking a lenient view of his offence."

The policeman looked solemn. "On the evening following my visit to the resort which I have described to you," he said, "I entered the prisoner's garden at 7 o'clock p.m., and, looking through a downstairs window, I found him teaching a child—whom I subsequently ascertained to be his daughter—sedition. Reading to her about the Kingdom of Heaven, telling her Principalities and Powers were nothing to worry about, and teaching her to kneel before a chair and ask for help against the Government." "Dear, dear," said the magistrate, "the man who would corrupt the mind of a little child!" There was a good deal more evidence to the same effect, with which I need not detain you, and, at the end of it, the prisoner pleaded guilty to having used subversive language about the Atheist State and to having taught his child to do the same, with the natural consequence that his child was removed to a State institution and he himself deported for five years to the Isle of Wight.

There were other cases tried on the same day which were equally interesting as evidence of the indestructible love of interference that has always characterised the human race. One man, for example, was charged with having had three children, whereas the Birth Control Act had fixed the limit at two. The magistrate pointed out that the Victorian era—when Englishmen, as he said, were "a nation of chartered libertines"—was past, and denounced him as a menace to family life. Another man, who had lived with the same wife for ten years, was told that in an age of freedom such things were intolerable and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for setting a bad example. "Besides," said the magistrate, "if this sort of thing goes on what is to happen to the other women?" Then a schoolboy was fined ten shillings for travelling on a 'bus while wearing no gloves and so spreading microbes, and a girl aged nineteen was fined five pounds for driving a motor car at a speed under seventy miles an hour. And all kinds of people were fined for all kinds of reasons which will be valid enough in 1982.

The truth is D.O.R.A. is immortal. At one time she has her eye on the Bible, at another on *Ulysses*. All she wants is to interfere, and there is a D.O.R.A. in every human breast which does its utmost to make sure that the interference will be with the tastes and pleasures of other people. England, Russia, and Italy—they differ in many ways, but they are all kingdoms of the immortal and interfering D.O.R.A.

Y. Y.

THE HIDDEN HAND?

He has increased the self-respect of Italians. He has raised the status of a nation. . . . The system has cost Italy her political liberties. . . . Popular government has been destroyed.—THE TIMES on Mussolini.

BRED in a sturdy Liberal school,
I always thought the chief objection
To Russia's Communistic rule,
Its dictatorial direction.
I held the Plan's material gains
Too dearly purchased by decisions
Which kept the ballot-box in chains
And shot or exiled Oppositions.

But I was wrong, it seems, for folk
May gain in dignity and status
Who, under a dictator's yoke,
Discard their thinking apparatus;
And people rise in self-respect
(And learn to make more goods, and sell them, too)
When only privileged to elect
The people whom their Masters tell them to.

This seems to me a paradox
Exceptionally hard to credit;
And yet my scepticism rocks—
It must be true: the *Times* has said it.
Or can it be its columns hide
The workings of the Hidden Hand, a
Peculiarly subtle side
Of Bolshevistic propaganda?

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

[*We regret only to be able to publish a very small percentage of the letters sent to us on almost all of the subjects under discussion. May we again request correspondants to be brief?*—ED., N. S. & N.]

LABOUR AND THE BANKS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. E. H. Davenport considers the Labour Party's decision in favour of socialising the joint stock banks to be "sheer folly." The only argument which he adduces in favour of his view is that the decision is likely not to win but to lose votes, and to frighten the electorate. But this is to beg the question. The question is whether the socialisation of the joint stock banks is, or is not, necessary to the successful institution of a Socialist policy. If, as I for one believe, it is necessary, the party has to choose between frightening the electorate and abandoning, or at least postponing, its hopes of achieving Socialism.

It was clear at Leicester that the delegates were definitely against the second of these alternatives. They have had experiences of two Labour Governments which have attempted to govern without introducing a Socialist policy; and, while they were prepared to recognise these Governments' difficulties, they were decisively of opinion that twice is enough. They did not want the Labour Party to come back to power except on the basis of a clear Socialist programme of action.

It remains, then, only to consider whether the socialisation of the joint stock banks is essential to such a programme. Surely it is. Many people have, even to-day, a quite exaggerated view of what can be done by manipulating currency and credit through the Central Bank. In fact, a Central Bank, as recent experience

has shown, can increase the supply of credit, but cannot secure that the increased supply shall be actually used, much less that it shall be used for industrial development, and least of all that it shall be used in accordance with the requirements of a national plan of production. The use and distribution of credit is preponderantly a matter not for the Central Bank but for the joint stock banks with their far-flung system of branches and their direct contacts with borrowers and depositors. It passes my understanding how anyone can expect a Socialist economic plan to work while the chief agencies of credit distribution are left in private and anti-Socialist hands.

True, Mr. Davenport vaguely suggests that the joint stock banks might be brought under some form of control. In my experience control is a weapon that can be far more easily and effectively used to stop people from doing things than for making them do what they do not want to do. It would be impossible by control to make the banks lend money to businesses to which they did not want to lend it, or even to make them expand their total loans in accordance with a policy of national economic development.

But I suspect that, even if Mr. Davenport admits the truth of this view, it will not shake him. For his letter seems to me to be written on the assumption that the next Labour Government ought to be not a Socialist Government attempting speedily to carry through a large instalment of positive Socialism, but a Lib.-Lab. Government, wooing his "Liberal-minded voter" and carefully respecting the timidities of the "Liberal-minded" (or, as I should prefer to say, "non-Socialist") sections of the population. He and I differ, because to my mind the coming of any such Government would be almost the worst disaster I can imagine. It would be merely MacDonaldism over again—the vain repetition of a proven failure. If Mr. Davenport thinks the Labour Party's decision "sheer folly," is that not because he is not a Socialist, and thinks the attempt to introduce Socialism "sheer folly" as well?

G. D. H. COLE.

7 Parsifal Road, N.W.6.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As one of the sponsors of the amendment incorporating nationalisation of the joint stock banks in the resolution adopted at Leicester, may I ask what Mr. E. H. Davenport precisely means by the statement that this "means nationalising the deposits"? We in our innocence have believed that it would, *inter alia*, give the depositors in fact greater security. Presumably Mr. Davenport thinks otherwise, but I have a difficulty in following the mind of one who writes as though "the money of the big capitalists" consisted of deposits in the joint stock banks. Mr. Davenport apparently approves the nationalisation of the Bank of England: wherein does this differ *in principle* from the fuller proposal?

Of course, either the one or the other will be met by misrepresentation and panic-mongering. We have learnt that one cannot propose any real change and escape that; and our chances of power (as distinct from mere toleration in office) depend upon our ability to educate the electorate to an understanding of our purpose, and to win its confidence in our capacity. We shall do neither, I surmise, by trimming our programmes to avoid arousing opposition.

One other point. Mr. Davenport says that we "funk" the appeal to force, and *therefore* must rely upon reasonableness; but "funk" and reasonableness never run together. I can assure him that none of the delegates at Leicester even considered the appeal to force as a desirable alternative, and hence the question of its practicability did not arise.

National Union of Clerks and Administrative Workers, 17–20 Holborn Hall, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1. FRED HUGHES.

[Mr. Davenport will reply next week.—ED., N.S. & N.]

D.O.R.A.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your comment on Mr. Goldring's letter you repeat one of the oldest and most fallacious arguments of the enemies of liberty in this country, namely, that arbitrary closing hours are necessary in order to secure to shop-assistants the eight-hour day of which nobody wishes to rob them. There appears to me to be no necessary connection between the two things at all. If a shopkeeper finds that it is worth his while to keep open twenty-four hours a day, is it not to the obvious advantage of everybody that he should put his employees to work in eight-hour shifts and do so? Trade is stimulated, the public is convenienced and this admirable citizen employs three times as much labour as he otherwise would.

If anything were wanting to emphasise the weakness of such a defence of the existing regulations, it is the crowning absurdity that shops may keep open to sell certain of their wares and not others, and that those others may often be legally bought and sold at other establishments a few yards away.

The other evening, between eight and ten o'clock, I was walking down the Tottenham Court Road when I found I was out of tobacco. I turned into a small café which happened to be open and asked for my particular brand.

"Sorry, sir. We can't oblige you."

"But you've got stacks of it on that shelf just behind you."

"Yes, sir, but we're not allowed to sell it after eight."

"Why not?"

"Dunno, sir. It's the law—but you can buy tobacco at the public-house on the corner over there."

I went into the public-house on the corner, bought an ounce of nauseous shag (which was all they kept), and drank a glass of beer I should not otherwise have had, thereby profiting the wicked brewers whom you believe apparently to be behind the movement for sanity and repeal.

If you, Sir, would be good enough to explain exactly whose working conditions were benefited by my petty annoyances of that evening, it would do much to console me for them.

Oxford and Cambridge Club, S.W.1. ARCHIBALD LYALL.

[Our comments on this subject are to be found on page 471. —ED., N. S. & N.]

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,

60 *Mayors Join War on "Dora."*
Big Bid for Freedom.
—*Daily Mail*, Sept. 17th, 1932.

Ring out wild bells and let who will be hearty:
Mayors rush to join the Anti-Dora Party.
Behold a list is in the Press;
Chief Magistrates will flock *en masse*
To th' Albert Hall, midst loud applause,
To vote against their own bylaws.
Pan-pipes have sounded in the ear
Of the Mayor of Dorchester,
And given a suggestive tootle
In that of the Mayor of Bootle.
Broad Silenic laughter's very
Desirable at Shaftesbury.
The gay insouciance of the Pink 'Un
Commends itself to him of Lincoln.
Joy in the fruits of Bacchus' yield
Spurs on the Mayor of Macclesfield.
And wreathèd smiles and twinkling toes
Delight the Provost of Melrose.

No doubt, since Mayors now turn their mind
To letting joy be unconfined
The one-time problems of the day
Are safely solved in every way,
We need not spoil our Mayors' enjoyment
By mentioning to them unemployment:
Before embarking on the fray
To make the world safe for public play,
A Mayor who never duty shirks
Must have provided Public Works.
Since public-houses exercise
The minds of City Fathers wise,
It may with likelihood be stated
The housing problem's liquidated.

One cannot help suspicions base
That this, alas, is not the case.
One might suggest, with due submission
(While grateful for the kind permission
To purchase chocolates galore,
And take one's shirt off on the shore,
And night and day to quench one's thirst),
That Mayors should tackle first things first.

Farington Lodge, Near Preston, Lancashire. JUDITH TODD.

BOMBING THEM INTO THE LEAGUE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I must thank Captain Harrison for his acknowledgment of my paternal feelings towards the Iraq minorities, but I cannot allow his contradictions to pass unchallenged, especially regarding matters at which I was present or directly concerned, whilst he was not. To take an extract from his letter: "Captain Mumford states that after the unfortunate incidents of the elections the exasperated Kurds were driven to rebellion. This is hardly correct; the election riots took place in Sulaimani on September 6th, 1930; about September 18th the famous Shaikh Mahmud came into Iraq Territory from Persia in contravention of his solemn undertaking given in 1927."

Why my original statement is disproved by these dates is a little hard to follow.

The facts which led up to the rebellion are as follows:—In July, 1930, a representative meeting of Kurdish notables took place in the Sarai to discuss the situation arising from the publication of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty. This meeting decided, by a majority of approximately sixty votes to five, that petitions should be drawn up and sent to the League of Nations and the High Commissioner asking that the minorities should be given satisfactory safeguards before British withdrawal from Iraq. They also decided to boycott the impending elections as evidence of their discontent. In August the Acting High Commissioner and the Acting Prime Minister visited Sulaimani in the hope of allaying Kurdish fears. The meeting did not achieve its object, but it should be noted that the High Commissioner informed the Kurdish representatives that there would be no objection to their expressing their views as long as they confined themselves to constitutional methods.

On September 6th an attempt (which had been kept secret until the day) was made to hold the elections, and when the Kurdish notables refused to participate, police were sent into the bazaar and unfortunate petty traders were taken to the Sarai and forced to record votes, on the assumption that they were representative notables of the town.

This action resulted in a riot and a crowd, practically unarmed except for sticks and stones, was shot down by the Iraq Army, after which the originators of the petitions to the League were thrown into prison and removed to Kukuk, where some of them were kept without trial for a considerable time. Subsequently it was stated officially that the crowd in question was armed and that they were not fired upon until an Iraq Army soldier had been killed. One Iraq Army soldier was killed, but by accident some ten minutes after the riot was over; a fact witnessed by two British officers. Shaikh Mahmud gave this incident as his reason for rebellion, and whatever his personal character or possible doubt as to the genuineness of his motives, it is difficult to deny that he had been given a strong case.

Captain Harrison implies moral indignation that Mahmud should have broken "his solemn undertaking not to enter Iraq," whilst the election incidents do not impress him. Perhaps during his previous service in the Southern Desert he learnt the trick of "straining at gnats but swallowing camels."

Captain Harrison then states that only small numbers joined Mahmud as he moved through different villages and most of them left him when he moved out of their district, and draws the conclusion that the Kurdish "exasperation" against the Iraq Government cannot have been of great strength. I cannot believe that, with his experience of Kurdish areas, Captain Harrison is not perfectly well aware that this drawing of a few men from local villages and releasing them for others from different districts after a short period, is the normal and only possible method of warfare for Kurdish leaders. They have neither the organising ability nor transport and other facilities to keep large forces in the field for any length of time.

Mahmud kept with him the number of men he needed for his purposes. The contention that, because he never had more than a few hundred men with him at any given moment he had little support, falls to the ground. As to Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, Captain Harrison gives his case away when he states "It was intended to do this by the method of peaceful penetration . . . without a shot being fired." It could and should have been done in this manner, and it is a pity that Captain Harrison is so vague as to the reasons why such an excellent plan was dropped in favour of open hostilities. His excuses about "other events in the desert and Kurdistan" and some "raiding and counter-raiding" are hardly convincing. Does he suggest that "raiding and counter-raiding" had never been known in these areas when the original plan of peaceful penetration was drawn up?

The quotation from Sir Francis Humphrys appears to me to reflect considerable criticism upon past British High Commissioners, as it seems curious that a chief "notorious for the tyranny and oppression of his rule" should have been left in peace for so long to carry on his nefarious life. I do not imply that either Mahmud or Ahmad were "sturdy patriots defending the rights of minorities," etc., but I do imply that the operations against them were a cloak to crush the Kurds generally instead of giving them the constitutional and practical safeguards which both the Mandatory Power and the Permanent Mandates Commission led them to believe they would receive and of which they definitely stand in need. Of course Captain Harrison, on his recent tour, found many Kurds willing to express pleasure at Ahmad's removal. Nobody suggests that the latter had so impeccable a character that he could possess no enemies, and in any case it is not usually difficult to find men willing to speak what they consider to be pleasing words to a conqueror on his first arrival!

I should also like to make it perfectly clear that my article in question did not suggest that Royal Air Force methods of warfare are more brutal or undesirable than the use of ground troops. On the contrary, from my own experience, they are both more efficient and far less objectionable than the use of foreign troops moving through a hostile area.

May I conclude by quoting, with complete agreement, the final paragraph of Captain Harrison's letter: "Might we not, as Englishmen, remember that it is our duty to support not only the rights of the minorities of Iraq, but also the authority of its government?"

I think that Captain Harrison and I have shown fairly conclusively that the British Government has carried out the latter part of its duty with reasonable thoroughness, but why is he so vague on the former point? It is equally important, but at the commencement of his letter he says that it is not his purpose to enter into discussion of the Kurdish problem. Perhaps he is wise.

PHILIP S. MUMFORD.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—By the inspired error of an Indian compositor the Government was recently accused of "gross impartiality." . . . I recalled this phrase as I read Mr. Garratt's review in a recent issue. "Impartiality" is the virtue attributed by Mr. Garratt to the "Directors of Information" to the Indian Government, two of whom are among the authors whose works he reviews.

My personal experience, however, of Civil Disobedience in 1930 was that every statement of the Director of Information that I was able to investigate turned out to be inaccurate. Alleged atrocities on the part of the police were continually denied on no other authority than that of the officials whose conduct was called in question, and in flat contradiction to the unanimous evidence of non-official Indians.

On several other points I find Mr. Garratt's statements equally astonishing. Recalling to my mind the savage sentences and wholesale imprisonments of the last few years I look in vain for some evidence of irony in his quotation from *India in* 1930–31: "Criminal and civil courts successfully dispensed justice." With equal apparent satisfaction he quotes the statement that "life in rural India remained generally speaking as usual . . .," a bare statement, which to most Englishmen must be even more meaningless than the casualty lists in the War, though no less terrible in its content.

But if India is really so unmoved as Mr. Garratt would have your readers believe, why does the Government make use of ordinances that deny every moral and judicial principle for which English tradition is popularly supposed to stand? And how does Mr. Garratt himself explain his statement that "the last five years must have seen nearly as many new books about Indian political questions as the preceding half-century"? Is this, too, the spontaneous benevolence of the Briton?

There are innumerable other questions that I should like to ask, as, for instance, what Mr. Garratt understands by "responsible" Government, or in what sense he believes the Government to have "preserved peace." But most of all, as a pacifist myself, who has always admired military courage, I should like

to know in what way Congress can be said on any single occasion to have encouraged the Indian terrorists. It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Garratt that Bhagat Singh is as real a hero to India as Mucius Scævola was to Rome: the marvel is not that he was generally admired as a patriot, but that Gandhi should have restrained a more widespread imitation of his methods.

46 Lancaster Gate, W.2. REGINALD A. REYNOLDS.

CIRCULAR 1421

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that your correspondent, Mr. T. R. O. Field, refuses to face the reality underlying Mr. Tawney's letter. The attitude towards education of Mr. Tawney and those who would fight with him is quite simple. They regard it as a fundamental need which it is a primary duty of the State to supply to each individual child, without reference to the financial means of the child's parent. Certain fundamental services are already so supplied by the State or municipality. We do not think of imposing a means test upon those citizens who, say, have need of the police, or of a public convenience. Perhaps the National Government might care to consider this.

The proper means test is surely the income tax. We all contribute to the cost of education (amongst other more dubious services) in proportion to our income. Why, then, impose an additional payment, or tax, upon parents for educational services simply because their children happen to be of school age. Does Mr. Field consider that parenthood deserves special taxation or punishment? There is, of course, a lot to be said for such a point of view—provided it is put forward for what it is.

Toynbee Hall, E. S. WATKINS.
28 Commercial Street, E.1.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mrs. L'Estrange Malone's attack upon the Socialist League is based upon two grounds, first, that the Executive of the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda did not sufficiently inform its own members before the inaugural meeting of the League, and, secondly, that on two admittedly important points that meeting rejected amendments to its draft constitution.

As regards the first, the Executive of S.S.I.P. has already, in a letter to individual members, explained the reasons which, in its view, made quick action imperative, and is prepared to explain them again as often as required. To detail them here would take much space, and would hardly interest your readers: I only ask to put on record that they exist.

On the matter of the two amendments, Mrs. Malone's account hardly gives a true picture. The clauses enabling the League in certain cases to promote Parliamentary candidates for adoption by Local Labour Parties was inserted (as was fully explained at the Leicester meeting) in order to meet the difficulties of certain branches—not only in Scotland—where the "loyal" I.L.P. has in fact played a part generally recognised as valuable in local electoral machinery and where a break in this tradition at this moment would be very unfortunate. The constitution of the League, however, lays down quite specifically that political activity is not to be the primary object of the League, and I can assure Mrs. Malone, and you, Sir, that the firm intention of its Executive and its officers is to see that this is carried into effect.

As to individual membership of the Labour Party, the rejected amendment proposes to substitute in the clause "*expects* its members to be individual members of the Labour Party, of the Co-operative Movement, and of their appropriate Trade Union" the word "*requires*," and it was rejected because of the impossibility of *enforcing* so comprehensive and expensive a clause upon low-paid workers and young persons, who are already members of the Labour Party through other bodies, such as Trade Unions. S.S.I.P. itself, of which Mrs. Malone is a member, has never tried to enforce double membership, and the rule passed at Leicester is actually more stringent than the existing rule of S.S.I.P., to which no objection has been raised. In any event, the whole constitution, as has been clearly explained, is provisional, intended to cover the period during which the organisation is getting under way, and to come up for revision at Whitsuntide, by which time, we hope, it will be possible to find forms of wording, satisfactory to everyone, to cover these and similar difficulties.

S.S.I.P. has not handed over its offices or its organisation to anyone. The Socialist League is, by resolution of the S.S.I.P. Executive, being lent house-room and certain secretarial services during the interim period, but no S.S.I.P. activities have been hung up or curtailed, and the winter programme is proceeding as arranged.

In conclusion, may I appeal to your correspondents to look at the new body in the light of its real purpose—that of helping to create an informed and vigorous body of Socialist opinion? The Executive of S.S.I.P. has acted throughout in the belief which it thought, from previous soundings, was shared by the bulk of its members—that this object would be best achieved by associating its small but keen membership with those propagandists of the I.L.P. who had rejected its past futile policy in an endeavour to bring in the far wider public of those who at present belong to neither group. If the means of this association are open to criticism let them be criticised, but do not let us forget that we are *ex hypothesi* trying, not to recriminate among ourselves, but to make Socialists. MARGARET I. COLE.

7 Parsifal Road, N.W.6. (Hon. Sec., S.S.I.P.)

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your note on the Socialist League Conference gives only a very partial account of the proceedings. There was certainly considerable difference of opinion between the members of S.S.I.P. (with whom were associated many members of the Labour Party) and the I.L.P. delegates. But the difference of opinion was expressed over the very question of "safeguards in the constitution" which you suggest was satisfactorily dealt with. The facts are that the two amendments to introduce these safeguards—compulsory membership of the Labour Party and the abolition of the financing of particular candidates——were both defeated by a strong I.L.P. majority. There is nothing in the constitution about local branches being pledged to open research offices, and the high subscription—4d. per member per month for the branch affiliation fee to the National Council alone—does not suggest that the main function of the National Council is simply the co-ordination of research. For these reasons and from general impressions, the conclusion which I for one drew from the conference was that the new body, for all its talk of research of and working within the party, was in fact going to be very like the old I.L.P.

That the I.L.P. affiliationists should form a league is perhaps regrettable—especially now that the Labour Party has swung so firmly Left—but inevitable. That S.S.I.P. should be swallowed up by this league is really unfortunate. For S.S.I.P. was merely a loose organisation of the more active research, educational and propaganda workers within the party. It had no collective programme other than the programme of the party, and it offered no collective criticism. It was an admirable method for the dissemination of new ideas and the vitality which springs from them. Above all, though its membership was as yet quite small, it had great potential value as an association through which the vitally necessary educational work which the new programme involves could be carried out. And all this could have been done without producing any internal dissension whatever.

It is most unlikely that in the Socialist League an adequate substitute will be provided. It will be a larger, more highly organised body, acting much more as a unity within the party, probably putting forward its views on party policy in more or less formal fashion. It will be only half in the party, draining away funds which might be going to the party with a membership of persons who until recently were in continual conflict with the party. For these reasons, even if its policy is sound, its influence on the party in general is likely to be minimised, while locally if its branches are at all strong it is very likely to create friction. Its membership for some time will probably be confined to the old I.L.P. It is just possible that the members of S.S.I.P., on whom the whole matter was sprung at very short notice, will refuse to agree to the merger. It is to be hoped at least that they will consider the situation very seriously before subscribing to the dissolution of their society. But if it does dissolve one can only hope that the Socialist League does not live up to its constitution and that the necessary educational work which S.S.I.P. should have done is carried out in some other way. For if the bold programme adopted by the party conference is to have any chance of success it is essential that it should be understood as widely and completely as possible, and that when it comes to putting it into practice there should be no internal dissension. A MEMBER OF S.S.I.P.

SIR RONALD ROSS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In 1923 a movement was started to found an Institute to perpetuate for all time the name of Sir Ronald Ross, to carry on research work and to stimulate malaria control measures in the Empire. The Ross Institute was officially opened in 1926 by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, and Sir Ronald Ross was the Director-in-Chief until his death. What the Institute has already achieved is well known the world over, but if its work is to be continued more financial support must be forthcoming immediately. There is no endowment fund and for two years contributions have been 25 per cent. below expenditure. This state of things cannot go on much longer. Surely an effort can be made to save the Institute and place it on a sound financial basis.

C. C. MCLEOD, Chairman.
QUEENBOROUGH, Hon. Treasurer.

EAR-RINGS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It is interesting that Mr. Allen should be stimulated by Y. Y.'s article on ear-rings to revive the theory that they strengthen the eyes. He quotes the dustman and coal-heaver as authorities. In my early youth a dustman suggested a remedy for whooping cough, the details of which I have forgotten, except that it involved the use of a dead cat. Fortunately it was not tried.

I should like to be convinced that ear-rings do have this beneficial effect. Fishermen have good eyesight and wear ear-rings, but they are nearly always looking out on wide open spaces and should have good eyesight in any case. One sees many women in London wearing both glasses and ear-rings, so that the cure is apparently not infallible. Has any oculist who is not in league with an optician shown that by piercing his patient's ears they can read the bottom line of his chart? Do screw ear-rings work as well, and does the effect disappear when they fall off?

A teacher of dramatic art expressed the opinion that ear-rings give a woman "presence" and help her to get her own way in an argument. Possibly it is because of this that the theory has been kept alive, or perhaps it is a subtle piece of advertising on the part of ear-ring manufacturers. FALLACY HUNTER.

MR. WELLS'S NEW SOCIETY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Many readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION must have been convinced and stirred and conscience-stricken by Mr. H. G. Wells's project for a World Society, but probably most of them cannot see how to act on these ideas.

I myself have formed a group of picked persons undertaking certain definite lines of work. Already we find so much to do that we badly need workers. On the other hand, we can only accept workers who reach a high standard of personal quality.

I hope that any such people will write to me at once. In particular, we need a highly qualified full-time secretary.

65 Portland Place, W.1. JONATHAN GRIFFIN.

THOMAS HUXLEY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your reviewer of *The Great Victorians* quotes approvingly from Mr. H. J. Massingham's essay on Thomas Huxley. The passage which is said to polish Huxley off concludes thus: "It would undoubtedly have been better and happier for mankind if he had never been born." I venture to suggest that this extraordinary verdict, and the re-printing of it, are alike regrettable.

Apart from the questionable good taste of such a pronouncement, while Thomas Huxley's near and distinguished relatives, who hold in high honour their great forerunner, are still living, is not the statement ludicrously absurd? Surely when one remembers Thomas Huxley's contribution to thought, to the sum of human knowledge and the emancipation of the human mind, one cannot but feel, whether all his opinions were right or wrong, that his appearance on the human stage was of immense advantage to mankind. And, incidentally, what a naive criticism is here of Thomas Huxley's creator! Mr. Massingham would seem to say in effect, He ought to have known better than to make a Thomas Huxley!

W. S. GODFREY.

Chevington Grove,
Bury St. Edmund's, Suffolk.

Miscellany

A SKATING EXPERIENCE

PROBABLY every living man over forty, war or no war, has had a few narrow escapes from sudden death. Memories of mine bring me face to face with long lonely stretches of cold water. One of the most frigid of these experiences occurred when I was living in Germany, in Stralsund, on the shores of the snuffling, tideless Baltic Sea. It was in January two or three years before the war, when there was a very severe frost. The sea was frozen, at least the sheltered parts of it were frozen, and I was foolhardy enough to go for a long skate on it. It very nearly happened that I never came back.

Opposite me was Ruegen Island, behind me the towered and spired city of Stralsund. At first I floundered about, for my skates were blunt and would not cut into the intensely solid ice. But a little practice brought adjustment, and getting tired of circling round within easy distance of the promenade I did what I had seen nobody do—struck out with the intention of reaching a sort of cape or long neck of land, at the end of which was a pilot station for ships coming from Norway and Denmark. It was many miles away, but I hoped to reach it before one o'clock. The time was then nearing mid-day.

At first I kept from fifty to two hundred yards of the shore, for it seemed best to make the curve northwards later. The sky was blue and glittering. The ice glittered. The cold was intense and a strong east wind, almost a gale, drove me along at what seemed a terrific pace. It was scarcely necessary to make muscular movement, just a sharp swift stroke to right and left every now and again, for my flapping grey overcoat acted like a sail.

I balanced myself and raced past low sandy shores and jutting promontories of clay, past the brown snow-flecked ploughed fields and dark green pine plantations, here and there a bauer's or fisher's cottage, or the black bulk of a windmill silhouetted against the patchy white waste. Towards the pilot station I was aware of a flicker of white wings—seagulls; and high above my head, beyond gunshot range, their long necks craned out, and cackling audibly, a flock of wild geese went flying over to Ruegen Island.

The sun was glaring, and there was a fierce stare of light on the waste of frozen waters which seemed to threaten something diabolical. Discomfort, fear, and intense delight were intricately intertwined within me.

Every now and again I burst into a wide ring of rough, crinkled ice which seemed nearly to jolt my heart into my mouth. It was the wind, as the water froze, which had made these unpleasant obstructions; and the wind, too, which had made innumerable white hummocks like the peaks of snow-capped elfin volcanoes. I had to steer carefully past these, for I knew that they quickly smash through, and though I was still close to the shore, where the water underneath was seldom more than two or three feet deep, and probably frozen again in its lower layer, a sudden hold-up would have meant a smashing fall, and, likely enough, broken bones.

Coming to another ring of crinkled ice I struck to the right of it and out into the open, well away from the shore. But I seemed to be at the mercy of the wind. Often when I tried to skate in the true sense of the word I found I couldn't. The ice was like polished steel or shop-window glass. Perhaps because there was salt in it. Yet the Baltic is not a salt sea like the North Sea. It is what is known as "brackish." And it is the natural element of several kinds of fresh-water fish—pike, roach, and perch—as well as many of the salt-water kind, which include not only flounders, but also, strangely enough, herrings and codling, turbot and sprats.

I passed several groups of fishers, round furry caps on

their heads, icicles hanging from their drooping yellow whiskers. They had made little holes in the ice with long-handled halberd-like axes, and they were baiting for pike with live roach, or spearing for eels. One unusually tall man was standing on a big toboggan, propelling himself along with a pole which had a spike at the end, the wind evidently helping him forward as readily as the pole. Not far away from him other fishers were staring hopefully at a hole at their feet. They hailed me; their voices seemed to come menacingly over the frigid expanse. I could not understand why they yelled so hard; I imagined they were hurling insults. I said to myself that they were "social democrats" denouncing me for having the leisure to go skating. Then I felt as if I were trespassing, like a tourist being interfered with for going through fields without a footpath.

But now I was flying over deep water, and straight in front of me was the neck of land, covered with a thick wood of pines. That was my goal. I had set out to reach this and then walk back, ten to fifteen miles along the coast, for I knew that I could not skate against the wind.

For a time all went well. Only when I saw to my right a trough of broken ice, made either by a steamer or the wind, the sensation of trespassing (a sort of criminal trespassing) of being in the regions of the *streng verboten* gripped hold of me. But I passed the threatening water, and forgot my soul's discomfort; for the swift movement and my beating blood took all fear away. The ice was marvellously good.

Then the end came. Or very nearly did. I was running right to glory.

The first warning I had of something going wrong was by a flock of seagulls. The next minute I was nearly into it. A long iron-blue band of open water stretched right across the path I was making for myself. Then I knew why the fishers had yelled at me.

I whoo-hooed and drew in a great breath. I nearly fainted with fright. But I saw it just in time, and just in time switched round. What brought it there I don't know; perhaps it was a terminating thin tentacle of the Gulf Stream. But I had nearly mistaken it for a band of black ice, and the wind had nearly blown me into it. Plainly it was a current of some sort, and as soon as I could pluck up enough heart to take a good contemplative stare at it I noticed that the edges of white ice on either side looked like the flat banks to a brimming brook.

I turned round to skate back; but it was impossible to make any headway against the savage wind. The worst of it was my troubles seemed to be only just beginning. I seemed to be looped round with nets of death. I had skated into a bewildering ambush. The shore to the right was less than a mile away; but here and there at frequent intervals, right across the short cut I wanted to make, were open spaces of water. One even got in front of me, and there were others to my left and right. I had not noticed these as, looking straight ahead, I had come scudding recklessly along. The seagulls warned me of the presence of the worst of them, but every moment I thought the ice was going to break through. My eyes, now accustomed to these curious unfrozen patches, discovered numbers of open eddies and thin places which I expected every moment to tread into. I couldn't remember the way I had come, and my skates had left no tracks. A sledge with a yachting sail from the pilot station skimmed past two hundred yards to my left, but it went as fast as a railway train and I could not follow its course. There was nothing for it but to dodge the pools of water and get through to the reedy shore somehow. But a long half-hour passed, long stretched out minutes of the most painful tacking and manœuvring, before I dared make a straight cut for hard ground. When I sat down and unstrapped and unbuckled my skates I felt as if I had risen out of the grave.

On the road over the ploughed field just in front of me there was a little inn. How glad I was to get there it is impossible to set down in bald prose. When I told the landlord where I had been he would scarcely believe me. He informed me somewhat warmly that the very last place I ought to be in was his bar-parlour. At any rate his beer and sausage were the most heavenly I ever tasted.

HERBERT E. PALMER.

FILMS, LITERATURE, AND THE SWEDES

FIRST we are heartily glad to welcome the Swedes back to London. They have been away far too long. Their silent films had much German merit about them, intelligent plot and cultivated photography, without the artiness which was often rife in German studios. After a long occultation Swedish pictures have come to life again, with a talkie apparatus and every modern improvement.

Those who go to the Academy with high hopes for this Swedish rebirth need not be disappointed. The story of *En Natt* is exciting and romantic, needing a tragic ending, which it gets just as one was beginning to be fearful. The actors, particularly the hero and heroine, are charming and go charmingly through their parts. They are not made to act as stars: after all, Sweden is close to both Germany and Russia. The photography, too, is delightful without being too clever. Some sunrise sequences are as good as anything I have seen, and all the outdoor photography is varied and graceful. You cannot help enjoying one half of *En Natt*.

The hero, a Swede of good family, falls in love with a peasant girl. Parental indignation, unpleasant scenes, mutual insults—"leave the house," which the hero does, going apparently to Russia, symbol of his having bridged the gulf between the "Two Nations." War then breaks out between Russia and Sweden. The hero marches back into his own country, is captured, taken before his brother, is sentenced to death, but is allowed to pass a last night with his love, if he will give his word of honour to be back by seven. Here the situation at the front is a little obscure.

Women are completely amoral. That is notorious; and his love sees no reason why he should go back next morning simply to be shot; and she even uses what physical force and cunning she possesses to prevent such a catastrophe. As for poor Beckius, torn between love and honour, he is in a dreadful state, about as bad a state as anybody can be in. Both lovers are very nice-looking, and one is terribly sorry for them. But what is the director going to do about it? What can he do about it? In fact, he does nothing about it at all. The two distracted creatures weep in each other's arms, sob out each other's pet names, and get more and more worked up, till Beckius pulls himself together, flies back to honour, and is shot by some sentries on the way. He is back by seven, but is already dead on his horse.

There is, in fact, a hole where the kernel of the film should be. The theme of the picture is the conflict between love and honour, but the moral crisis is completely muffed because the two protagonists behave exactly as they would in real life. Their outward behaviour bears no relation to their moral conflict. They can express themselves adequately neither by speech nor gesture.

We know what sort of things ought to be said on such occasions. The great European dramatists employed the method of the opera. The protagonist stood aside and made a long speech of the most unlikely kind:

> And in this brief world draw thy breath in pain

or

> To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow

or

> Here will I remain
> With worms that are my chambermaids.

It is unnecessary to go on. Anthony, however, actually let us into the secret:

> I am dying, Egypt, dying,
> Give me some wine and *let me speak a little.*

Now, such methods would be unsuitable for the screen even if the script-writer could invent them. For the drama appeals primarily to the ear, the film to the eye. One is static, the other dynamic. The film actor cannot much heighten the action by the use of speech.

There remains an equally unrealistic alternative, complete silence and the heightening of emotion by gesture and the art of the ballet. Readers of Mr. Quennell's fascinating *Superficial Journey through Tokyo and Peking* will perceive that the Japanese theatre is based upon the ballet. As I read, I kept on transmuting what Mr. Quennell was describing into movie terms. But to act like the Japanese the film actor would have to lead their remote and acrobatic lives. At present he could not begin to do what the Japanese actor does; and, if he did, the rest of the film would have to be conventionalised to suit the technique of the tragic conflict. Still, something of the ballet technique must be adopted if the film is ever to rise to the heights of tragedy. Most directors have, perhaps unconsciously, recognised this difficulty, and the picaresque, the external incident, has remained the raw material of the film, though Chaplin has on occasion succeeded in fusing the picaresque and the internal conflict. But the difficulty of the problem may be gauged from the completeness with which the highly intelligent director of *En Natt* has failed in his attempt. A further reflection arises. Until the film has succeeded in developing a technique suitable for expressing the internal conflict many people will refuse to take the "movie" as seriously as music or poetry. It will remain for them a first-class entertainment and nothing else. FRANCIS BIRRELL.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

MR. HARCOURT WILLIAMS'S production of *Cymbeline* at the Old Vic is astonishingly good entertainment. No play of Shakespeare's makes such impertinent tugs at our sensibilities—almost every emotional appeal springs from a false stimulus, a misunderstanding or deception of which everybody in the theatre except the unfortunate protagonist is already fully aware. Yet despite this, the story, as Mr. Williams shows, can be made to move briskly and interestingly on a plane of light-hearted, not-too-serious fantasy. Even the painfully overburdened denouement, reduced to its right proportions, becomes pleasantly amusing as one genially wonders who can possibly remain to be "recognised" by whom; and the darker side of the comedy is toned down until Iachimo's bedroom escapade becomes no more than a lark not in the best of taste, and the unpleasant Cloten affair is no more serious than the tragedy of Punch and Judy. Miss Peggy Ashcroft, however, will have nothing short of limpid sincerity. The serene beauty of her Imogen is a living flame amid the tawdry glitter of the theatricalities in which she moves. Mr. George Devine's Posthumus is sadly mediocre beside her, and a matter-of-fact flatness in his voice makes even the denunciation soliloquy extravagant rather than tremendous.

Van Gogh at Manchester.

The largest exhibition of work by Vincent van Gogh hitherto shown in this country, opened at the Manchester City Art Gallery on October 12th. We can follow the caterpillar-like progress of those first stages, when he was preaching to miners in Belgium, when as he said himself he was "mixing earth" with his palette. Clumsily painted, but powerfully conceived, these early canvases seem to radiate as much of gloom as his latest ones do of fire. At Paris he made the discovery of the impressionists. But it was in solitude at Arles that the sun first got into his colours. The effect is startling. In *Park at Asnières* (17), out of the best of his Paris pictures, paint is used painstakingly to produce an illusion of sunlight through trees. In *The Cornfield* at Arles (23) it becomes an end in itself. Under the Provençal sun he could make patterns which were half personal and half Japanese. The impressionist technique was extended to make flowing and writhing forms. The *Yellow Chair* (lent by the Tate Gallery) and the *Berceuse* (which shows him under the influence of Gauguin) owe too much to pattern: the *Yellow House at Arles* is dominated by its colour-scheme. The nearest approach to such a synthesis is seen perhaps in *Cornfields at Sunset*, a work which sums up his last stage almost completely.

Ibsen at Croydon.

It is so long since London playgoers had the chance of seeing Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* that the journey to Croydon, where the play is being done at the new Repertory Theatre, is well worth while. *Borkman* is perhaps the most typical of Ibsen's plays; the theme—a man's choice of ambition over love—suggests *Pillars of Society*; the characters are paralleled in other plays. It is a mixture of situation becoming argument and some of the finest drama Ibsen wrote. The whole of Act II—Borkman in the gallery—and the final scene of the play where Borkman and Ella stand on a hill at night, watching the great boats on the river, the factories alight and working, and survey the broken love and ambition of their lives, are magnificent. The acting of Mr. Alan Webb as Borkman, Miss Selma vaz Dias as Guinhild and Miss Susan Richards as Ella, made these scenes effective and moving. Where the performance lagged was in the weaker moments of the play, in the inconclusive third act, in the character of Erhart Borkman, who is little more than the characterless pivot of others' ambitions. Considerable experience and finesse are needed to give conviction to these parts of the play, and Mr. Robert Eddison's Erhart, impulsive and scared, a bit protesting and falsetto, only emphasised the weakness. Ibsen's humour is always the most difficult quality for an English producer to deal with; humour is liable to peep out at the wrong moment, and to seem curious when it should appear naturally. Mr. Henry Carr (who also plays the part of Foldal) has made much, in his production, of the play's fine quality, but left the faults to look after themselves.

A Delicate Matter.

A dramatist can make of modern manners a passably entertaining play even if he has little sense of character. But it is impossible to be interested in the conventions of a past age unless they are exhibited as the background of real people. Miss Susan Glaspell's play, as acted at the Little Theatre, sadly lacks conviction and impressiveness. Long before the curtain has fallen on the last act of *Alison's House*, we are tired of Alison's ubiquitous spirit. She was a poetess and as such belonged to the nation. But in Iowa, in 1899, the matter did not end there. Should the love poems discovered after her death be given to the world or not? The older members of the family thought they should be destroyed. Indeed, Aunt Agatha (Miss Nancy Price) went to the length of trying to set fire to the house in the hope that in the general mêlée the poems would be burnt, too. Unfortunately, it was an abortive attempt. The theme does not emerge until the third act, when Miss Nancy Price, macabre and glassy-eyed as ever, has spectacularly died. Then Elsa, the erring daughter, to whom the manuscripts have been confided, pleads with her father for their preservation. Of course, the nation wins the day. The beautiful performance of Miss Iris Baker as Elsa gives to the play at some moments a moving quality which one knows must be present in any play of Miss Glaspell's, but which this production fails to evoke.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, October 21st—
"After Dinner," Gaiety Theatre.

Saturday, October 22nd—
Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, 11.
Schnabel, Queen's Hall, 3.
B.B.C. Chamber Concert, Broadcasting House, 8.30.

Sunday, October 23rd—
C. Delisle Burns on "Obsolete Education," Conway Hall, 11.
G. D. H. Cole on "A Socialist Monetary Policy—The Socialisation of Banking," Transport Hall, 7.30.

Tuesday, October 25th—
Sir J. Evelyn Wrench on "Britain's Place in the World To-day," Friends House, 1.20.
"Miracle at Verdun," Comedy Theatre.
Schnabel, Queen's Hall, 8.30.

Wednesday, October 26th—
"The Gates of Ur," Arts Theatre.
"Once a Husband," Haymarket Theatre.
B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Thursday, October 27th—
Dr. Arnold Wolfers on "The Crisis of Democratic Rule in Germany," Friends House, 1.20.
"Walking in Her Sleep," New Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE scientific mind, I have observed, is a trifle shocked by the increasing tendency to popularise its mysteries. All specialists have a dislike for open discoveries openly arrived at, nor is it just to attribute this their abhorrence to professional envy or to caste sensitiveness. The struggle against intellectual standardisation is becoming increasingly embittered, and within a few years the battle between the "high-brows" and the "low-brows" will have opened as a conflict more passionate, and perhaps more internecine, than the old struggle between the ancients and the moderns. It is thus inevitable that our scholars should fortify their citadel, should feel a little anxious of the *trahison des clercs*. The common reader, however, has cause to feel grateful for the potted knowledge which is now so lavishly provided for his self-education. Nor are the "outlines" which pour forth from our more enterprising publishers to be condemned off-hand as a lowering of standard. Not only do they provide many thousands of people with knowledge which is frequently accurate and quite often amusing, they serve also to furnish the authors and compilers of these celestial omnibuses with the occasion, and even the need, to revise traditional legends in the light of modern experience. Such a survey, such a revision of accepted judgments, has been attempted by Mr. G. R. Stirling Taylor in his *Modern History of England* (Cape, 12s. 6d.). With unflinching courage, no inconsiderable wit, and a marked sense of analogy, Mr. Taylor has reviewed the orthodox tenets of British Historians as applied to the period, the certainly diverse and extended period, between 1485 and 1932. This book will cause small pleasure to the orthodox student of history; but to the unorthodox reader it will furnish much amusement and some enlightenment.

* * *

It is perhaps unfortunate that Mr. Taylor should have given to his book so formidable a title: his study, in fact, is not so much a history as a commentary, not so much a commentary as a criticism of certain historical legends which the Whigs would have us believe. It is evident that Mr. Taylor belongs to that small band of eccentrics who hold that the human intellect should play a dominating part in human affairs. He sympathises even with those tenuous tendencies in modern political thought which are striving to evolve some formula, if not for the corporate, then at least for the scientific state. He has no liking whatsoever for the amateurs. Nor does he appreciate those of our statesmen whose appeal is, or was, directed to the instincts of their fellow-citizens rather than to their reason, to feelings rather than to thoughts. His heroes, though he is no hero-worshipper, are Henry Tudor, William and Robert Cecil, Walpole, Castlereagh, Lord Salisbury, Wellington and Smuts. For the two Pitts, Canning, Fox and Nelson, he has no instinctive sympathy at all. His dislike of the Industrial Revolution, of Bentham and of *laissez faire* tempts him at moments into overstatement, nor is a diverting quality of exaggeration absent from his judgment of other events which have determined the apparent currents of our history. I confess that it amuses me to read of the Civil War in terms of what we should to-day call "a banker's ramp." I am entertained when I am told that the "timid Pitt" was not the only person who "mistook a gang of tenth-rate lawyers, journalists and army contractors in Paris for a rising of the people." I am delighted when I find the adolescent Byron of 1812 given two and a half pages as a serious parliamentary figure, as a "prophet of the years to come." How pleased, how surprised, poor Byron would have been! And I quite relish being told that the repeal of the Corn Laws was inspired "by the lowest principle of human endeavour that has ever soiled the history of man's ideals." Mr. Stirling Taylor is nothing if not opinionated: "Canning," he writes, "was not nearly so bad as he seemed. It was a want of taste and lack of deep intellect that made him a figure that caught the attention of the lighter journalists. . . The flashy Canning stands out in the history of his period as the chief representative of the new plutocracy." What, oh what, will Professor Temperley say to that? Mr. Taylor would probably be indifferent to the opinions of the professional historian: he prefers Froude; and yet his very contradictoriness, his very wrong-headedness, are what give to this book, not merely a highly amusing aroma, but a much more important stimulus. For Mr. Taylor really does try to give us new lamps for old.

* * *

Let it not be supposed that this book, in that it is "brilliant," is therefore trivial or unwise. Mr. Taylor's hatred of liberal cant has tempted him at moments to regard as hypocrisy all the formulas with which our bemused ancestors tried to enlighten their dark gropings. Yet his is no unbalanced or unreflecting judgment. He starts from the contention that "there has been too much servile dogmatism on the part of the orthodox historians." He may well be right in his assumption. And if right, then he is justified in his own violently unorthodox treatment. He is evidently much under the influence of Mr. Butterfield's "Whig Interpretation of History." This influence, in its turn, is wholly respectable. And he has clearly devoted much calm and even anxious thought to the two elements of history—the element of apparent events and the element of unapparent tendency, what he calls "the history of the ruling class," and "the history of tradition." In tracing the development of these two elements over a period of nearly five hundred years Mr. Taylor makes many discoveries both explicit and implicit. He has a great dislike of the middle classes, feeling that they have succeeded within a period of a century in rendering us indeed a nation of shop-keepers and amateurs. It is this latter word which occurs again and again in his study, and which, as we reach the end, suggests its leading motive. For the tenor of Mr. Taylor's doctrine is that Great Britain became a happy country not by luck, but by the infinite capacity possessed by the Elizabethans for taking pains; and that we have lost that happiness since the day when haphazard emotion, alternating with sheer human acquisitiveness, displaced the disciplined planning of the three great Tudors. His conclusion, therefore, is that we should return to the Tudor principles of government, namely, "that the welfare to the State as a whole is of more importance than the personal advantage of privileged individuals," and that we should abandon "those Liberal principles that made the nineteenth century a catastrophic period in our history."

* * *

It is a little hard for those of us who persist in regarding British Liberalism as representing intelligence inspired by humane feelings to swallow Mr. Taylor's denunciations without some protest. Yet it is not unwelcome to observe Mr. Taylor laying about him with such vigour and such conviction, banging hard upon the revered locks of nineteenth-century utilitarians. Nor need we dissent for one moment from his conclusion that we have lost in our public life that guidance of scientific intelligence which rendered us not only a prosperous but also a happy nation. Yet Mr. Taylor is no confirmed pessimist. After all, he feels, the nineteenth century may, for all we know, have been no more than a regrettable incident. And for the future? For the future we have Major Walter Elliot, M.P., and his *Toryism and the Twentieth Century*. To Mr. Stirling Taylor the condition of England to-day is, like Canning, "not nearly as bad as it seems."

HAROLD NICOLSON.

LORD OXFORD

The Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith. By J. A. SPENDER and CYRIL ASQUITH. Hutchinson. Two Vols. 36s.

The *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, by Mr. Spender and Mr. Cyril Asquith, is a singularly appropriate work. It has all the merits, and therefore all the faults, that an official biography of that peculiarly English statesman and Prime Minister ought to have. An official biography is, indeed, the only possible biographical mausoleum for his memory at the moment. The idea that historically contemporaries are too near to events and persons to judge them is one beloved of journalists, partly because it absolves them from thought and partly because it provides them with authority for condemning the thoughts of other people; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred an intelligent person is much more likely to form a just judgment about contemporary events and persons than about those which have long ago become the mummies and myths of what is called History. Asquith, however, is the one case in the hundred which proves that the rule is not quite utter and complete nonsense. A biography of him which gave a true and complete picture of the man and his achievements, which really succeeded in placing him in the history of statesmanship and politics, is not to-day possible. It is not that we are too near to him and these events to judge him, but they are too personal to us to allow us to judge them with that objective eye which is essential to the unofficial biographer. A happy man who, by the grace of God, had lived his life between 1830 and 1900 might easily, with the exercise of intelligence, have managed towards the end of his days to write a very good and impartial biography of Sir Robert Peel or Lord Aberdeen, even of John Russell, Dizzy, or Gladstone—in the nineteenth century, as in most periods of history, history and politics were to those who lived in them what the air is to mammals and the water to fishes, a necessary and almost colourless environment of which they were personally hardly ever aware. But that is not true of those unfortunate generations which have lived through the years which have seen the decay and death of Liberalism, the great war, and this insufferable peace. For the past twenty years contemporary history has never left us alone, and our private lives have been invaded, turned upside down, and often destroyed by the effects of what Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, or Mr. Baldwin happened to be doing or not doing in Downing Street. Our personal contact with history and politics (let alone politicians) has been bitter and painful; our reactions to them are not like those of a bird to the air or a fish to the water, but of a man trying to escape from a hostile machine-gun or a wave of poison gas. To attempt to write an objective and impartial biography of a man who was spraying bullets at you out of a machine-gun would be absurd; and for much the same reason it would be impossible to write an objective and impartial biography of Asquith, who was so intimately concerned with the making of that history from which we have suffered during the last twenty years.

That is not to say that a friend and son of Lord Oxford cannot give us an excellent account of his life and a portrait of him as a man. This they have done as well as it could be done. We get the picture of a very charming man, a typical Englishman who typically has all the characteristics of an ancient Roman (of the Augustan age). A man who, within certain narrow limits, is extraordinarily able, with a certain noble reserve and obstinate integrity. A man of a very muscular and an extremely male intelligence, but without any imagination, any creative activity, any of the intellectual curiosity of intellectual passion which has occasionally turned a politician into a statesman. As one reads these two fat volumes it is impossible not to feel a growing affection for the man, even though one remains aware of the dangerously incompetent way in which he is flourishing his machine-gun. He had a singularly attractive mixture of personal qualities; he was fundamentally a scholar and combined shyness with arrogance; he was half a child and half a man of the world. In a world and a Cabinet where meanness and treachery seem to have been the ordinary rule of life, where the standards of gentlemanly conduct and the necessity of winning the war and advancing your own career established a code of manners and honesty so vividly described by Lord Beaverbrook as almost universal in the Cabinet during the latter part of 1916, it is rather refreshing for anyone who has not been a Cabinet Minister to discover that Asquith himself continued (as old-fashioned people might say) "to behave like a gentleman."

When it comes to politics, the authors of this biography rightly—since it is the official biography—do all they can do for Asquith as a politician. There are four crucial questions in which the career of Asquith as a Liberal statesman must be judged eventually: his attitude on the Boer War, his handling of the Lords and Irish problems, his handling of the international situation in the years when he was Prime Minister before 1914, and his conduct of the war. On all these questions Mr. Spender and Mr. Cyril Asquith make out a fairly good case for Asquith's policy. It is significant, however, that as one reads their defence one tends to forget that they are defending a Liberal statesman. Yet, after all, though at the end of his career Liberalism as a political idea was dead and buried and the Liberal Party dead, if not quite buried, it is surely relevant, in judging his achievements, to remember that he entered politics as an upholder of Liberalism when it was at its strongest as a political force, or a potential political force. He may have been merely unfortunate, opposed to social forces so strong that no statesman could have stood up against them; in this way it may be that he was not responsible for the destruction of Liberalism, the destruction of the Liberal Party, and the destruction of Europe. Yet these are the facts which the future historian will have to consider in forming an estimate of Asquith's political career. At the moment it is possible only to point to one or two traits in his character which emerge from his official biography, and which, perhaps, explain to some extent his inability to cope with the portentous events which finally overwhelmed him with the rest of us.

At any time between 1830 and 1890 Asquith might well have been quite a successful Prime Minister. In quiet and prosperous times he would have drifted before the winds of prosperity and guided the country with skill and dignity in the same direction. He had the mind and manner, the integrity and oratory of the best Victorians. He would have been a more successful Prime Minister than Aberdeen (he might even have kept us out of a Crimean, if not out of a Great, War) or John Russell, and might have done great service to Liberalism in its early days before the difficult and delicate problem arose of putting Liberal principles into practice. But he was temperamentally incapable of dealing with the violent storms already brewing at the end of the nineteenth century or of standing firmly and clearly for a political principle and ideal when in the twentieth century came the real testing time of Liberalism. Both his many admirable qualities and his intellectual and emotional limitations made his failure inevitable. His lack of passion and imagination and his distrust of anything which savoured of abstract principle ensured that he would never take the kind of stand for Liberal action or peace which a man of Gladstone's temperament might perhaps have successfully taken in those eight fatal years before the war. At the same time, he had none of the creative imagination and will to action which have enabled men like Disraeli and Bismarck, who had perhaps few ideals and no principles, to control events instead of being controlled by them. When the time came for

"BP"
PLUS
Plus what?
Plus a little something some others haven't got

making a decision on high politics Asquith always made one, and he could always give an able, honourable, and extraordinarily lucid account of his reasons for making it. But if one examines the problems, crises, and decisions rather closely, one finds that events had forced a decision and that the decision was in the line of least resistance. It is a curious fact that this kind of mind which we see in Asquith, the mind which cannot make itself up unless it is forced to do so by events, is characteristic of all the British Prime Ministers of the twentieth century from Balfour to Mr. MacDonald, except Mr. Lloyd George. It may be that in a modern democracy it is the man who thinks and acts in this way who is most likely to find himself at the head of a Government. Unfortunately, however, as this biography really shows no less than Lord Beaverbrook's Memoirs, it is not a type of mind which can cope with the necessity for making decisions in war, whether that war is between Great Powers or members of the same Cabinet. It may also be doubted whether it is the type of mind likely to prevent Great Powers drifting into war or capable of leading a party or nation in the arduous task of translating into practice some great political principle or social ideal.

LEONARD WOOLF.

POETRY OF TO-DAY

News from the Mountain. By RICHARD CHURCH. Dent. 3s. 6d.

Poems, 1930–1931. By W. H. DAVIES. Cape. 3s. 6d.

The Best Poems of 1932. Selected by THOMAS MOULT. Cape. 6s.

Mr. Church's undoubted distinction among poets of his generation resides in a quality that is by no means easy to define. His workmanship is austere, but he is not alone in that. He has a mind that is for ever challenging the surface of things and seeking for a significance withheld from the eyes; but others before him have interrogated the universe as shrewdly, as relentlessly, and have been as little satisfied with the answers supplied by a traditional faith. His philosophy, so far as one may infer it, is not exceptional; his voice is not loud, nor his idiom eccentric; yet no sensitive reader can encounter a page of his verse without recognising that here is a poet of rare inspiration and highly individual flavour. In technical accomplishment he has gone, consistently, from strength to strength; his art has matured with his vision, and both are now at a white heat which only the poetically insensible can mistake for coldness. Here in this volume, as in its brilliant predecessor, *The Glance Backward*, there is the beautiful bareness of a winter landscape seen in strong sunlight; the line of hills on the horizon is clear and noble; the trees, stripped of their luxuriance, reveal a stark beauty. But the metaphor must not be pursued farther, for it is no frozen stillness that Mr. Church effects. Though it seldom yields an obvious music, his verse has movement and colour and a wealth of subtle cadences; and its structure is as firm and as free as that of an athletic human body. He has escaped from bondage to conventional versification (though more often than not he is content to use a traditional metre, giving it, however, a new manner) without being caught in the toils of what is called "freedom." His style is the disciplined servant of his vision.

It is very possible that Mr. Church sets more store by the title-piece in this new collection than by any of the others; and it may be a merely personal idiosyncrasy that makes at least one reader prefer always the shorter, the singing pieces. Most long poems consist, inevitably, of a lyricism much diluted with thoughtfulness; and though one may not question that the result is poetry, or at the least poetical, one is apt to wish that the poetry, being something less than forty under proof, had been communicated through the less pretentious (but not less subtle) medium of prose. Mr. Church, however, seldom provokes such a wish; he touches everything with imagination, so that one forgives him even his descriptive passages. Yet to turn from this:

> Beyond the larches
> We rose past boulders, gentian, coralline moss,
> And touched the white paws of the mountain creature,
> The first snow bedded in a breast of cowslips.
> The padded claws dabbled in that fragrance.
> Here we reached the roof of sober thought,
> The ordered house of Man. Beyond it lay
> The white panther, indolent in the light,
> Dreaming its lithe and beautiful desire,
> Calm snow-death, and the cruelty of ice.

—to turn from this, good though it is, to such a fusion of lyric and epigram as "Challenge to Dualism"; or to the elfin pastoral, "Procession"; or to the fine economy of the poet's "refutation" of Plato, which begins:

> I crumble in my fingers
> The handful of sweet mould,

and ends:

> Here is my strength
> To challenge Plato,
> Who denied his own mother
> In this handful of earth—

is to turn from poetical allegory to direct speech. And the sixteen brief lines entitled "Silence," with which the volume ends, surely bring us, with their simple and artless-seeming perfection, as near to pure poetry as we may hope to come. This is a volume that will unquestionably consolidate Mr. Church's reputation.

The good wine of Mr. Davies needs no bush: we need only render thanks for his incomparable gift. Here are forty new lyrics, and though not all are equal in quality to this poet's best, there is at least a generous handful of exquisite things. There is no white-hot passion in Mr. Davies; he has rather the serene twinkling temper, the large-eyed innocent airs of Campion and Herrick and their anonymous peers. It is as if song, to him, comes as easily as speech: it is indeed the native utterance of his heart, celebrating his pleasure in the delights of the rural world, the loveliness of common things. It would be profitless to inquire at precisely what emotional temperature a literary conceit acquires the starry incandescence of poetry: it is enough that Mr. Davies, who deals so largely in such conceits, seldom fails of his effect or provokes a doubt of his sincerity. Even his sententiousness, which plays a larger part than usual in this new collection, is in the true Elizabethan tradition:

> Still comes no answer to my greatest question—
> Am I two clocks, or am I only one?
> I know my Body is wound up to go
> A certain number of days, and all is done.
> But is my Mind another clock, wound up
> To add its chime to those immortal spheres;
> One clock for Earth, to run its numbered days,
> The other for my more-than-mortal years?
> That is my question; this, my only finding—
> One clock or two, there'll be no further winding.

Mr. Davies's book is charmingly decorated by Miss Elizabeth Montgomery, and the same artist adds her grace-notes to *The Best Poems of* 1932, which is the eleventh number of Mr. Thomas Moult's series of anthologies devoted to English and American periodical verse. Where so many authors are represented, it would be ill-mannered in a reviewer to pick and choose.

GERALD BULLETT.

OUR INCOME

The National Income, 1924–1931. By COLIN CLARK, M.A., University Lecturer in Statistics, Cambridge. Macmillan. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Colin Clark's book is unquestionably a statistical study of the highest quality and the first importance. It can fairly be called the most illuminating contribution to statistical knowledge that has been published for a good many years. It is, however, one of those books which inevitably place the reviewer in a difficulty, unless his review is destined for one of those learned journals which think nothing of reviewing a book a year or more after its date of publication. For no one who sets out to deal with Mr. Clark's study promptly can pretend to any complete evaluation of the soundness of his conclusions. To arrive at such an evaluation would involve many weeks of hard work, where Mr. Clark has obviously put in several years of hard work in making his estimates. The value of his book to scholars is that it will amply repay this detailed study; but it has also for the less conscientious or well-equipped reader the merit of presenting him with a picture of recent changes in the national income and its distribution unrivalled in the range and width of information on which it is based, and in the convincingness of its broad conclusions.

Mr. Clark sets out, of course, on the basis of earlier studies of the national income by Professor Bowley, Sir Josiah Stamp and Mr. A. W. Flux. In more than one respect he convincingly corrects their estimates—especially the Bowley-Stamp estimate

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of the amount and proportion of income accruing to wages in 1924. He also brings out very clearly the rising proportion of the national income taken by salaries; and he carries his calculations on from the base year 1924 to 1931, on the basis of an extraordinarily wide knowledge of current economic data and of their legitimate use.

He is not, however, content merely to study the development of the total money income of the community and its distribution among different classes of recipients, and among incomes of different magnitudes. He goes on from this to an exceedingly valuable survey of the changes in national production and of the contributions made by the various productive forces to the sum-total of income, bringing out very clearly the growing importance of services in relation to physical production, the high proportion of the total value on the market attributable to transport and distribution, and the great importance of the building industry and of non-industrial forms of investment in the total accumulation of capital. He proceeds thereafter to discuss how the national income is spent, in relation to the various forms of production; and this leads him to a concluding analysis, on the lines of the formulae laid down by Mr. Keynes in his *Treatise on Money*, of the relations between output, savings, investment and prices, together with a statistical analysis set out for comparison on the basis of Professor Hayek's rival monetary theory. Incidentally, in this part of his book Mr. Clark makes an ambitious, and on the whole successful, attempt to construct an index number of the general price level of consumers' goods and services, as distinct from the index of cost of living constructed on a far narrower basis by the Ministry of Labour.

Enough has been said to show that Mr. Clark's book is certain to serve as an invaluable quarry alike for professional statisticians and economists and for more general readers in search of a factual basis for economic generalisation. These last will find, for example, that wages now constitute, and have constituted in every year since 1924 (when the study begins), a smaller proportion of the national income than before the war. Mr. Clark's figures are 42.5 per cent. for 1911, 41.5 per cent. for 1924, roughly 40 per cent. for 1929, and 41.3 per cent. for 1931. Salaries, on the other hand, have risen from 11.9 per cent. in 1911 to 24.2 per cent. in 1931—which, even allowing for some changes in classification, is a remarkable illustration of the changing conditions of employment. Or again they will find that, according to Mr. Clark's figures, the general level of consumption prices has fallen substantially less since 1924 than the Ministry of Labour's index number of the cost of living, and that, despite the heavy fall in the wholesale price index number, which reflects mainly the movement of international prices, the price-level of "output as a whole" has fallen even less than that of consumption goods. Taking 1924 as a datum line (= 100) the figures for 1931 are, for consumption goods and services 87½, for output as a whole 90½, for cost of living (Ministry of Labour) 84, for wholesale prices (Board of Trade) 62½, and for imports 61—an illuminating illustration of the instability of relative prices in recent years.

It would be possible to extract from Mr. Clark's book many other illustrative figures of equal interest and importance; but one further example must suffice. He concludes that whereas in 1924 there was only a small divergence between the gross savings of the community and the volume of investment, by 1931 the gap had widened from £27,000,000 to £258,000,000, in consequence of the refusal of the saving classes to invest and of their preference for leaving their resources idle in consequence of the depression. Indeed, in 1931, the volume of new investment was, according to his figures, only £43,000,000 in excess of the necessary provision for depreciation of existing capital assets. The bearing of these figures, even though they can be taken only as rough estimates, on national policy is obvious; for the tendency to under-investment by private persons obviously needs correction, not by public "economy," but by a wise enlargement of public spending on the improvement of productive resources. So Mr. Clark's invaluable treatise has this practical message—one of money—for the politician in addition to its inestimable value to the economist, and as a fresh advance in the concrete application of statistical methods. Mr. Clark is the more to be congratulated because of the very great difficulties put in his way by the inadequacy and quite unjustifiable incomparability of the official statistics compiled by different government departments, to which he administers a well merited and, it is to be hoped, a salutary rap over the official knuckles.

G. D. H. COLE.

THE WOMAN NOVELIST

The Gods Arrive. By EDITH WHARTON. Appleton. 7s. 6d.

To the North. By ELIZABETH BOWEN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

A Long Time Ago. By MARGARET KENNEDY. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Family History. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST. Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.

I Have Been Young. By ELIZABETH LOMOND. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Long-Lost Father. By G. B. STERN. Benn. 9d.

The Ladies' Road. By PAMELA HINKSON. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

It would be difficult to find seven novels by men, published in the last two months, which could compare with these books for distinction, freshness, humour, imagination and that sense of background—though this is less conspicuous—without which the making of novels comes too close to the making of cross-words. I call attention to this fact, and leave it to the reader, without drawing any general conclusions about the superiority of women over men as novelists. I do say, however, that there is still in some quarters a tendency to ignore or belittle the achievements of the woman novelist: there are still people in England who seem incapable of doing justice to the work of women and Papists. No doubt both are dangerous and disconcerting to comfortable, established, middle-aged conventions. These seven very different books all have a certain quality of youth, a spring of spiritual gaiety. Even Mrs. Wharton is not disillusioned. *The Gods Arrive* is not one of her best books. It is extremely workmanlike. It has passages of insight, of wit and of a robust intolerance with pretentious modernity that make it extremely good reading. It continues the story of Halo Tarrant and Vance Weston which began in *Hudson River Bracketed*. Many men will object to it—and they will often make the same objection in reading other novels by women, that the chief male character is disgusting. Vance is not only more selfish, more inconsiderate, more stupid and less attractive than one's noble self: he is lower than any except the most vulgar nit-wits of one's acquaintance. That is why a man should study women's novels: he will get an idea of what a woman thinks women have to, and can, tolerate, and he may revise his own naturally high opinion of himself. Halo displays unending patience to this evidently third-rate author who ignores, teases, and mortifies her; and the "happy ending" surely preludes a long life of boredom for Halo in her ministering to Vance's vanity. Miss Bowen's hero is even more intolerable, and when, in the splendidly swift and impressive climax, he meets his death in the motor accident, I rejoiced at the removal of this bullying barrister, even though his death entailed the death of Emmeline. In her portrait of that lady Miss Bowen has done a lovely piece of work. She invests her with a rare quality of silence and natural wisdom; Emmeline, in her association with Cecilia, with Lady Waters, with Sir Robert, has a grave integrity that admits of humour and loving-kindness. I have to take Miss Bowen's word for it that she would love Markie, that she would experiment with love and lose it and her integrity in disgrace and discomfort: at moments I can almost believe it; but I am only fully restored to my faith in her when she drives her lying Markie on that wild night, and, entranced, crashes her car in a head-on collision. Once Emmeline muses, "What did Markie always want to avoid?"—thank God, he could not avoid that accident. Miss Bowen's style has sharpened and cleared in this book, though she is still at times needlessly obscure and involved. Miss Kennedy's Dick is a little better than Markie. A solemn ass, though he may be a first-rate Harley Street physician. But then, Miss Kennedy rarely gives us any really estimable man—if they are estimable they are rather snuffy and scholarly, and a shade muffle-headed. Her book is tremendous fun. Years ago Elissa Koebel, the famous prima donna, has taken a brief holiday in a remote part of Ireland. Here she meets a crowded family party. She has a very ordinarily sordid, momentary liaison with Dick, who is on the verge of a breakdown through overwork. When the story opens Elissa's *Story of My Life* has just been published. Miss Kennedy prints the passage about her Irish visit: it is a devilishly clever parody of the love-confessions of another artist, recently dead—not a singer. Elissa who sees all life in terms of impulse and emotion, and never really *meets* any person, has transformed

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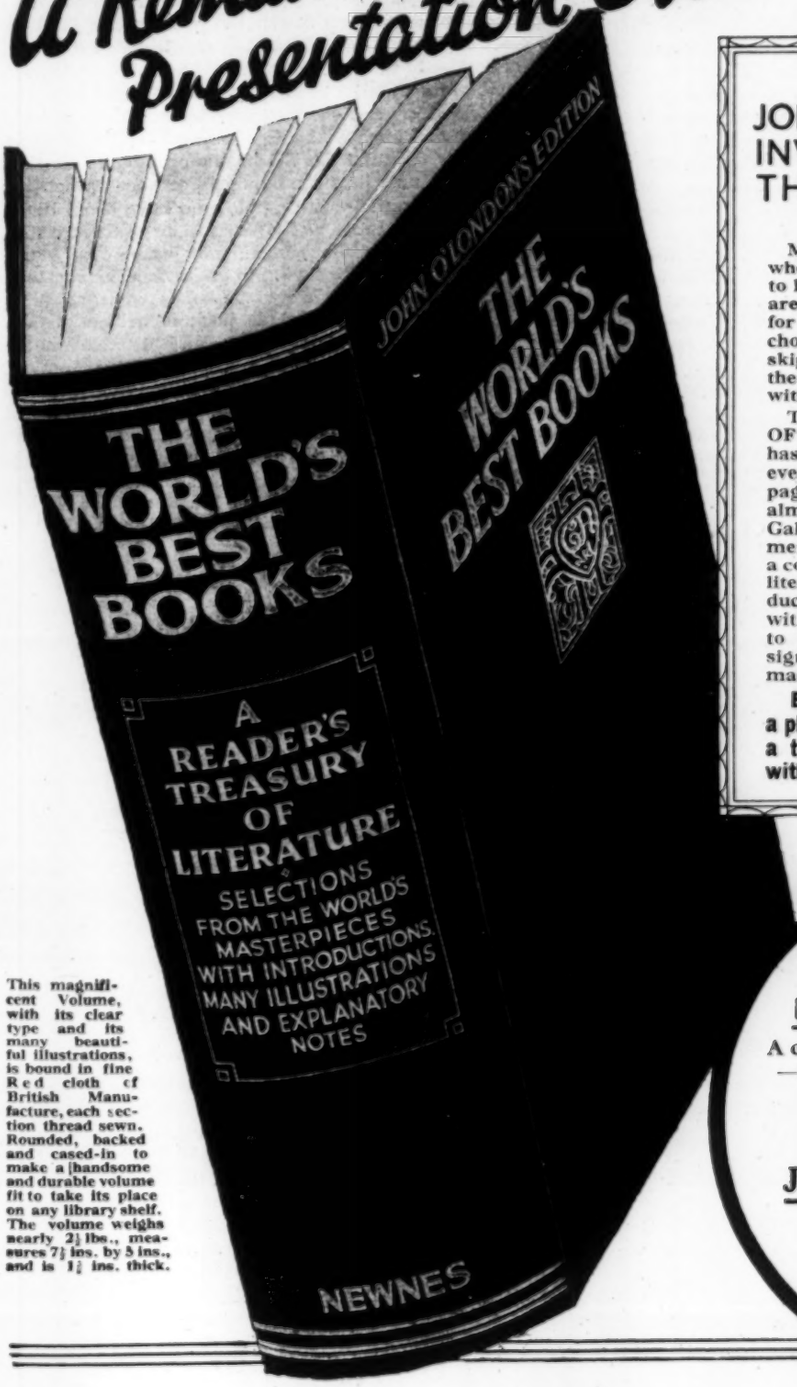
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her past into a fairy-story. Dick is now dead; but his widow is alive, and his children and many other relatives who were also in Ireland. The story has been hushed up. Now this gilt and gossamer parody of it is made public. Miss Kennedy then takes us back and tells the real story. She is excellent in her portraits of women whose strength shows in character rather than in conversation; and Ellen Napier is a masterly example of this excellence. This is the best book Miss Kennedy has given us since *The Constant Nymph*.

There is a passage near the beginning of Miss Sackville-West's novel which shows her constant if unobtrusive recollection of the world of actual fact.

> What a cold, rough night it was! So cold and rough that the usual little crowd of people had failed to collect on the pavement to see the Quality dashing out of its motors into Chevron House for the ball. Grosvenor Square was deserted, but for the procession of motors drawing up, one by one, depositing their loads, and gliding off again into the darkness against the railings, then to wait until the linkman bawled out the names at two or three o'clock in the morning. There was only one shivering old woman, trying to sell matches, by the steps of Chevron House.

It is a novel of two worlds, of two worlds that may soon be one world, the world of the possessors and the world of the dispossessed. That tragic background gives a seriousness to the love-story of Evelyn Jarrold and Miles Vane-Merrick—alas! another intolerable young man! I wish Miss Sackville-West had written a longer story on her theme. She begins with a splendid Thackerayan description of her chief people; she ends with a poignantly tragic account of Evelyn's death; but if she was to do her theme justice the middle parts of her book should have been much longer. True as is her handling of the background in the first part, it seems wasted before the book's end. *Family History* is, however, packed with keenly observed characters—Ruth, Evelyn's niece, old Jarrold, the Anquetils—and supremely the exquisitely rendered and truthful portrait of Evelyn's boy, Dan.

Miss Lomond's book is of an old-fashioned naturalistic kind, and of its kind forcible and candid. Her hero is a dipsomaniac; her heroine a mixture of saint and literary marvel. I am afraid I got very weary of Jack Rayne's incessant jags, hang-overs, repentances and relapses; and even more tired of his wife's credulity. He is a drunkard when she marries him, and when, after years of ill-treatment from him, she cures him, he deserts her for a less "high-brow" woman who will, I hope, give him a thick ear with any bottle he brings home. It is a relief to turn from this sordid atmosphere to Miss Stern's gay, laughing and light-hearted comedy of a charming rascal. She has no illusions about her Carl Bellairs who deserts his family because his baby is a nuisance, and when he is running the famous Tipstaff restaurant, meets the baby again, now a music-hall star who comes to sing at the Tipstaff. Miss Stern writes wittily and with unfailing deftness of the relations between daughter and father; and has no lapses into sentimentality.

Of all these books Miss Hinkson's, a novel of quiet and unpretentious assurance, is most in touch with reality. Here is a novel firmly planned, a story of England and Ireland during the war, in which beauty is made out of bitterness and agony, in which all the great issues of those tremendous years are seen, as most of us remember them, as they affected the private lives of men and women. Though it is with the women Miss Hinkson is chiefly concerned, her world of men has an effective authority: she attains effortlessly to a presentation of life as it is still lived in Ireland and in the English countryside. Stella and Cynthia, Francis, David, Godfrey and the rest, whether in childhood, or in youth tormented and blighted by the war and by the troubles in Ireland, are our friends from the book's opening to the last dreadful pages, written with no unkindness or anger, when the house they love is burned by the people who have loved them. Miss Hinkson's power to move us by descriptions of the country, by her awareness of the feelings of animals—there is a heart-breaking account of a deaf dog trying to understand his master's orders—is as certain and as tragically true as her gentle unfolding of human character. And the whole book is written with a restrained sense of beauty, an acceptance of life's trouble and the tortured misunderstandings that men make for one another. The book is full of mystery, and its shadows are typified by the shadow of the trees in the wood at Cappagh. There is a wonderful scene where Stella sees a gunman in that dear, familiar wood:

> He passed her, a black shadow on the pale path. The woods caught and held him and he went through them quietly as a countryman goes. Listening, she could not hear a branch snap, an old last year's leaf crackle. He had come out of silence and mystery and he returned to silence and mystery.

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LAWRENCE AMONG THE ETRUSCANS

Etruscan Places. By D. H. LAWRENCE. Secker. 15s.

Lawrence was always seeking his spiritual birthplace. Certainly it was not in industrial England, though he retained a grudging affection for its scenes; nor could it be found in France and Germany. New Mexico and Mexico gave him hope; but, on the one hand, the grisly undertone of Aztec culture and, on the other, modern American life drove him back defeated to the Old World. His last and perhaps his strangest inspiration took him to the Etruscan tombs of central Italy.

As usual, he began to write a book. It was Lawrence's habit when any subject profoundly interested him to throw his impression on to paper with an almost conversational ease and freshness. No scruples of style or scholarship stood in his way; it was enough that he should be interested in his theme. The literary side of his work could look after itself—which, since he was a born writer, it usually did. . . .

Etruscan Places is not Lawrence at his best—it is fragmentary, unfinished, unrevised, little more than a series of connected articles—yet, even though it were the only volume to his credit, somehow it would stand out from contemporary literature. First of all, his marvellous vitality. He had but to touch a subject as he passed to brush it over with the vivid colours of imagination and give it a new, strange, penetrating charm. He was like a moth that leaves its pollen wherever it goes. Lawrence may have beaten himself to death, flying towards a number of illusory stars; but the world is the richer for his frantic progress. In a universe that grows increasingly cold-blooded, such ardour is very often a trifle disturbing.

Of these qualities, his last book has its share. Lawrence describes his visits to various sites—Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Vulci, Volterra—but his description is not confined to the actual relics,

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and takes in their modern or mediaeval surroundings. Here he displays a deep imaginative sympathy. Few writers have been able, at so little expense, to re-create the atmosphere of a landscape as it is recorded in a corresponding personal mood:

> . . . We sit on the ancient heaps of masonry and look into weird yawning gulfs, like vast quarries. The swallows, turning their blue backs, skim away from the ancient lips and over the really dizzy depths, in the yellow light of evening, catching the upward gusts of wind, and flickering aside like lost fragments of life. . . . The lower depths are dark grey, ashy in colour. . . . From time to time, going up to the town homewards, we come to the edge of the walls and look out into the vast glow of gold, which is sunset, marvellous, the steep ravines sinking in darkness, the farther valley silently, greenly gold, with hills breathing luminously up, passing out into the pure, sheer gold gleams of the far-off sea, in which a shadow, perhaps an island, moves like a mote of life. . . .

After this it seems ungracious to observe that *Etruscan Places* adds more to our knowledge of Lawrence, and to our appreciation of his rare descriptive gift, than to our knowledge or understanding of the Etruscans. Not that he was intentionally self-centred. Quite the contrary; but his feeling for the Etruscan people and for the gay spontaneous life revealed in their tombs, brightly frescoed with pictures of feasting and hunting, leads him to re-enunciate his familiar message. The Etruscan became in his final period what the Hopi snake-dancers had been at an earlier time.

They represented the spontaneous life of the body, the "life of the blood"; whereas the Romans, at whom he girds with an acrimony which is almost personal, it is so intense, stand for all that was most hostile to Lawrence's scheme. It was they who crushed out this delicate flowering, they who substituted their ponderous and hidebound system for the subtler "blood-consciousness" of the ancient race. . . . True, we know next to nothing of the Etruscans except their art which, as illustrated in this book—it contains twenty admirably chosen photographs—suggests a strange fusion of exotic styles; but our ignorance makes them the more suitable for Lawrence's purpose. He mixes knowledge, presumption and wild conjecture into a phantasmagoric but sharply distinctive whole.

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Mr. George Moore once made an anthology called Pure Poetry, in which the poems were mostly those sheer, light-giving songs of which Shakespeare was the master, with Herrick and Campion to keep him company. The loveliest in that kind of verse is never written save by a man who has a great capacity for sadness, melancholy, passion and that other poetry which, if it be not pure, echoes more profoundly in the world's ear. So in Miss Macaulay's loving, patient reconstruction of that tragic England of 1640, when men turned from the Stuart tyranny, her chief figure is Robert Herrick, whose songs, sweet and simple as they are, came from a heart that knew disappointment and sorrow and a sudden anger at men's stupidity. *They Were Defeated* is a lyrical epic, in which the tragedy has the simplicity of an old ballad, the natural, deciduous melancholy of brief summer and autumn too severely prolonged. The book is in three parts—*Bucolick*, *Academick* and *Antiplatonick*. It opens with a fine, crowded scene, Elizabethan in its richness of humour, in Dean Prior church with Parson Herrick teaching his people to keep harvest-home. Miss Macaulay introduces the old legend of Herrick flinging his sermon at his chattering congregation; but the pig which he was fabled to have taught to drink becomes, and more plausibly, a little pig tied to the pulpit by the Squire's ill-behaved children. Herrick, Dr. Conybeare and his children, Giles and Meg Yarde, and the local gentry are the chief figures in this part; after, when we journey to Cambridge, we meet Cowley and Milton, Henry More and the brilliant, fashionable poet and rhetorician John Cleveland, whose love for July Conybeare, lightly begun and persisted in dangerously and selfishly, leads to the tragedy of her death.

Aware of the grave risks of a novel of this kind, Miss Macaulay has met and overcome them with characteristic audacity. She avoids the modern method of lifting her personages out of their own day; she has rejected the compromise of writing in a style with a scholarly flavour of times gone. Instead, she has gone to the labour of adopting, in all the speeches (and much of the book is dialogue) the very words and rhythms of the period. At first the reader may think there is rather too much of this; that Herrick and Suckling in their conversations are rather too anxious to say everything each time, to acquaint the overhearers of their discourse rather than each other. Soon, however, this device is seen to have a formal beauty of its own, to make a full and gracious pattern most suited to the world Miss Macaulay is making live again. We are so teased to-day by jog-trot, snip and snap, woefully thin dialogue, that it needs a certain exuberance of language to make us realise the generous richness of seventeenth-century England.

At first the pace of the book may seem slow, but quickly the reader rejoices in the internal swiftness of the story, its wide scope, its depth, its extraordinarily subtle adjustment of different interests and diverse people. Herrick and his friend, Dr. Conybeare the "atheist" doctor, dominate the background, and determine the lives of the young people. Julian, Dr. Conybeare's daughter, is a scholar, a child of imaginative intensity, and a poet. Her friends, Meg and Giles Yarde, are less to her than her brother Kit, or her father; and all people, perhaps, are less than her ideals, her dreams. For she transforms poems into poets, a dangerous trick if one is to meet the poet. Herself a child of fifteen years, she favours the new poetry—Mr. Milton, Dr. Donne, Mr. Cowley, Mr. Cleveland—but loves Parson Herrick's old-fashioned lyrics.

There is a dreadful scene of witch-hunting (here Miss Macaulay is a little out in her dates—there was no witch-finder before Matthew Hopkins, and he began his filthy work in 1644) when Conybeare tries to protect the old woman; Julian is so broken by this, and by her knowledge that her father, to save the witch from worse, has hastened her death by poison, that Conybeare decides on a visit to Cambridge, with Herrick and Meg Yarde. Cambridge is full of the quarrels of Anglo-Catholics and Puritans, of Papist and Protestant, of King's men and the men who have just returned Cromwell to Parliament. Here Miss Macaulay is at her best: she paints the lively riot of the University with broad and unfailing strokes. It is a great scene where Herrick, drunken and repentant, makes tryst with the spirit of Ben Jonson on All Hallows; and as good is the scene where the poets read their verses to each other, and Herrick is sadly bored by Henry More's.

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Mr. Herrick was well away now, among Antheas and Corinnas (but of Julia he read nothing) daffodils and primroses, meadows and music, gilly-flowers and sack, hock-carts, weddings, births and deaths. He was transported by the sound of what he read. Looking up, as he pronounced the title "Divination by a Daffodil," he met the grave, attentive, politely appraising eyes of young Mr. Cowley, and for a second he paused, checked as it were, by the impact of a cold wave. The first wave, was it, of the rising tide of a great, approaching, ineluctable sea, the sea of the next, of the younger, of the coming generation? What if the coming generation, who would decide a man's fate, did not admire that poetry which was his heart's blood, his life's vocation and employ?

In Cambridge Julian meets John Cleveland, is tutored by him, and learns to love. In her telling of this child's tragedy, Miss Macaulay has caught the tone of Herrick's poetry—when it is mournful, accepting and quietly lyrical. The clear notes of the love-story are not hindered by the noisier excitements of political and religious dissensions—for Kit turns Papist; all the world wonders at the fate of Strafford; the country is grumbling at King and "Little Canterbury." If we may judge from this book and from Miss Irwin's *Royal Flush*, the historical novel in England is entering on a new phase and a new popularity. Here is no made-up, artificial, over-decorated stuff; here, presented by a scholar, a poet and a wit, is an England which the discreet may notice, in spite of the differences in manner and speech, is not unlike the England of to-day.

ICHABOD

Philip II of Spain. By DAVID LOTTE. Routledge. 15s.
Napoleon. By JACQUES BAINVILLE. Cape. 12s. 6d.
The Emperor Charles of Austria. By HERBERT VIVIAN. Grayson. 18s.

Since the war and the subsequent revolutions the fallen captains and kings have passed from the arena of hatred and attack to some unknown Valhalla; and the biography of monarchs has made rapid literary strides. No longer are crowned heads the province exclusively of historians or economists; now that the shadow of the purple no more dims their faces we see how human and pitiable they are, these that were our gods or our tyrants, and we see them not monsters or heroes, but lovely relics, suave like old ivories, chipped and broken like ancient marbles, and having, besides their historical or human interest, the fascinations of decay. Together with these changes in their state, and in our attitudes, is come a great reshifting of old values, a reapportionment of praise and blame.

Mr. Lotte in his study of Philip II has given us a rarely satisfying biography. It is free from the second-rate Guedalla-isms and Strachey-isms that beset most modern Lives, and is written in clear, workmanlike English that apes no style and is without tricks or affectations. He has had access to hitherto unavailable material in the National Library at Madrid, and his matter is as excellent as his manner; his authorities are impeccable, and he avoids theoretical generalisations. (This book would, however, have been improved by an index, and the Habsburg family tree at the end is a little misleading.) His portrait of Philip, overburdened with his imperial heritage and traditions, moving, without vitality or enthusiasm, in the most splendid background imaginable, is very vivid and sympathetic, and we cannot but feel the weight of ancestry as we read. Altogether, this is a very commendable and praiseworthy piece of work, and the illustrations, printing, and general make-up are excellent.

Mr. Bainville's *Napoleon*, to which the warden of New College has contributed an introduction, is as impulsive and "voulu" a work as Mr. Lotte's is literary and calm. It is a political essay and is an attempt to explain Napoleon as the child of circumstance, who did not shape events, but was shaped by them, and succeeded only because of his extreme adaptability. In discussing Napoleon's "Transfiguration," Mr. Bainville sums up his thesis thus: "He is elusive, not because he is infinite, but because he varied with the situations into which fate thrust him. His mental power, though vast, was above all supple and plastic." He sees Napoleon not as a warrior or an innovator, but as the child of the republic, striving to continue the work of the Revolution, and failing, because he was without the traditions of France, which the Revolution, in seeking to destroy, had only continued and taken upon herself. They are an interesting contrast, Philip II, with all the background, the traditions, and the opportunities, failing because of their very weight, and Napoleon (according to Mr. Bainville), failing for lack of them. Mr. Bainville writes with that "indecent clarity of thought" for which the French are famous, and his book is efficient as a firearm, whilst Mr. Lotte's biography has the comfortable solidarity of good artisanship.

Mr. Vivian's life of the unfortunate Charles of Austria has almost every fault a biography can have, and yet remains very readable and admirably well documented. His book is sentimental, biased, too personal and tiresomely "chatty"; yet, because of the author's obvious sincerity, and his real devotion and personal loyalty to the last Emperor of Austria, and because also of the importance of the "secret and hitherto unpublished documents readily made available to him," it is well worth studying, if only for the account of Horthy's treachery.

About Motoring

A SUPER-MODERN SMALL CAR

THE sudden riot of new transmissions should prove a great lever in salesmanship during the winter and early spring. The Riley people have adopted the Salerni drive as an option; and since the E.N.V. concern at Willesden announced their readiness to supply Wilson pre-selector boxes to fit chassis of almost any horse-power, makers who can get delivery of such boxes are falling over each other to list such drives. The year has produced no other genuine novelties, and in a period of depression prudent men resolve to make the old car serve their needs for another year. But if they are offered an economical machine embodying all the latest revolutions, prudence often surrenders to self-indulgence. For the pottering type of driver the 10-h.p. Lanchester is probably the most attractive of the newcomers. But for those of us who are naughtily minded, relishing violent acceleration and a high maximum speed, the "K" series of M.G. Magnette cars offers a formidable attraction. This car is taxed at no more than £12, and unless it is driven rather roughly, its fuel, tyre and oil bills approach the minima. It can do 80 miles an hour with a saloon body, and is correspondingly fast on its three lower gears. It is perfectly flexible in traffic, and if the chassis platform is too short to mount the capacious type of closed body in which five corpulent people can stretch their legs, it is at least large enough to accommodate four ordinary mortals in very tolerable comfort. With these smallish saloons the process of entering and emerging is normally an acrobatic task, but the M.G. designer has paid toll to the people who provide "Silent Travel" patents. These cover the manufacture of a four-door saloon, so constructed that on each side of the car the fore door is front-hinged, and the rear door is rear-hinged; and there is no central pillar to carry latches and bolts. The doors are secured by latching into each other, and by vertical bolts at top and bottom. Captious critics may urge that the central pillar ought not to be lightly scrapped, as it forms a tie or brace between the floor sills and the roof; and in its absence the coachwork may yield to the twists and stresses which are weirdly termed "weaving" or "lozenging," when frame stresses are described. But this is not too certain. A six-legged stool would prove decidedly unsteady on an uneven floor, where a three-legged stool would prove firm. I have not yet tested a "Silent Travel" body which has survived 20,000 miles on a small car; but the sponsors of the idea aver with plausibility that their bodies are subject to fewer stresses than rival patterns which are cross-tied and cross-braced in every possible direction. However that may be—and we shall know more about the point in a year's time—the patent unquestionably endows a small saloon with consummate increases of convenience, when one wishes to get in or to get out.

In this car, therefore, we have a super modern type of body with a super modern type of transmission; and the entire chassis conforms to modernity. The whole engine is brand new, and ranks as a development of the M.G. racing experience. The firm's small cars have been as near as no matter invincible on the race track and in road races for the past two years or so. Astute handicappers like Mr. Ebblewhite have done their best to penalise them out of the high placings in our comic British races, where an eight-litre Bentley is set to defeat a baby Austin. But the M.G. engineers develop an extra horse-power for every second by which they are penalised; and contrive to win with almost sickening monotony despite the most vindictive efforts of the handicappers. This "K" model Magnette engine, rated

J H

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at a beggarly 12 h.p. by the Inland Revenue scale, and taxed correspondingly low, probably gives off something like 80 h.p. in its supercharged form. No wise man would buy the supercharged edition for ordinary road duties. But there is an unsupercharged model, which I recommend for saloon use; it has three carburettors, and is fast enough for anybody. Behind it the good work is undertaken by a Wilson gear box of the pre-selector type, fitted with four ratios, sensibly plotted. Top and third cater for road burning in easy country; second is adequate for ordinary British steep hills to be taken as fast as conditions allow; bottom will extricate the car from sloughs and farmyards. Every detail of the engine is of the racing type, and the car could easily be raced with a little intelligent supertuning; but in its delivery guise it is quite a refined, fast-touring vehicle. I have only one fault to find with it. In an evil hour some genius at the M.G. works invented and patented a stern luggage locker, which functions as a closed box for small articles, and can accommodate the spare wheel when the other contents are restricted in size. If the owner wants to transport a lot of luggage, he lowers the lid and uses it as a grid, strapping his naked cases on a naked platform. This is obsolete practice; a modern locker should carry fitted cases in spotless cleanliness without strapping. I hate to fault so fascinating a car, but naked luggage is an anachronism in 1932. The car sits the road amazingly well. The weight is kept low; the suspension has been developed in the severe atmosphere of racing, where a car must grip the road to an inch when it is cornering on nodding terms with death; and the tail ends of the springs slide in bronze bushes, instead of bouncing on shackles. The brakes are almost equal in diameter to the wheel rims, and the light metal known as Electron is exploited to improve cooling and reduce the unsprung weight. The frame is braced above the average, and should assist body durability by its rigidity. The lubrication is planned to eliminate qualms when an owner keeps his foot down all day long over the interminable straights of French main roads, or races his engine in low gear up the twists of a fifteen-mile Alpine pass. There is a very large sump, carrying a huge reserve of oil; and ample ribbing coupled with the use of Electron metal keeps the temperature down, a feature well balanced by free waterflow in the cylinder head and jacketing. Each exhaust has a separate outlet for some inches clear of the head, and the gas inlets from the triple carburettor system are planned to feed plenty of power at even distribution. It is not possible to find a more modern power unit in the whole field of car construction, British or foreign; nor will it fall out of date hurriedly. It is a car to keep, no less than a car to buy. The price reads high (£445 for the unblown saloon); but the value is in proportion to the price. A similar chassis with open touring four-seater body is catalogued at the modest figure of £385; and the young bloods can obtain an unblushing and entirely scandalous racing edition, sans guards, sans lid, sans everything stuffy, at a higher figure.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

No. 14.—THE THIRD BLOTTO PROBLEM.

"Blotto, old bird," said his General, "this week we'll have a little exercise in tactics.

"Your object in this exercise is to score as many points as possible more than your adversary in the following situation.

"You are in command of six units, wherewith you have to occupy one or more of three forts. We will call them forts A, B, and C. The enemy commander has five units, with which he too will occupy the forts. He will distribute his forces between the three forts as he chooses.

"When both sides have made their dispositions, points will be awarded to both as follows:

"For possession of fort A: three points. For possession of fort B: two points. For possession of fort C: one point. For every enemy unit out-numbered in a fort: one point.

"By 'possession' of a fort is meant its occupation by at least one more unit than has been placed therein by the adversary. If both sides place the same number of units in a fort, neither scores in respect of that particular fort.

"Before attacking the forts, your adversary receives the following instructions.

> 'Blotto's six units are divided into two parties of two units each and two of isolated units. Their situation is not known.
>
> 'He has ordered each party of two units, and each single unit, to march upon the nearest fort.
>
> 'Make your dispositions accordingly.'

"These instructions, Blotto, are in fact based on false information. The scales have been weighted in your favour. You can put your six units anywhere you like."

What orders should Blotto give?

No. 12.—PHLEGMATITIS AT THE CURATE'S.

"The most difficult problem so far set"—to quote several competitors. The Doctor wins 1s. 6d.; the Schoolmaster neither wins nor loses; the Vet. loses 9d.; the Rector loses 1s. 3d.

Several competitors have assumed that each solver must score more points than solvers lower in ability. They overlooked the possibility of the Curate's "sweeping the board" when the Doctor and Schoolmaster were both *hors concours*. The result as given above is consistent with the text of the problem, and implies an aggregate of winnings lower by 3d. than in the case where the Doctor wins 1s. and the Schoolmaster 9d.

If there is any demand for it, I will set out the full solution; but it takes up a good deal of space.

No. 11.—BEAUTY CONTEST.

Sets of Low's cartoons are awarded to:

(1) John S. Boyd, Merry Lee, Northwood, Middlesex.

(2) Stanley Walton, Applegarth, Brampton, Cumberland.

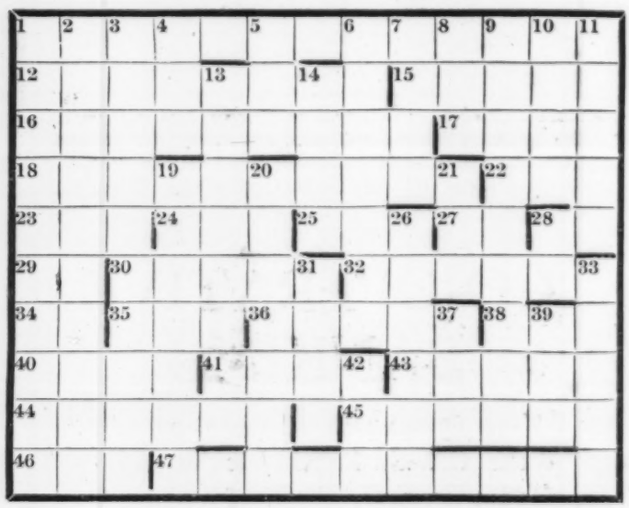
There were 60 correct and 9 incorrect solutions.

Sets of Low's cartoons, in portfolio, will be awarded to the senders of the first two correct solutions opened. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Gt. Queen St., W.C.2, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday, Nov. 1st.

NOTICE TO SOLVERS, IMPORTANT.—In response to requests from a number of solvers, I have decided that in future some indication of the method of solving the problem must be sent in with the solution. I sympathise with the general demand that the contest should be strictly a trial of skill.

CALIBAN

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



UNWELCOME ATTACHMENT

ACROSS

1. See title.
12. On the south side of the Danube.
15. Suitable covering for a chair.
16. Cromwell's "rump" had none.
17. See 31.
18. Globular swimmers.
22. Misshapen article.
23 *rev.* Greek letter.
24. Nymph without advertisement.
25. Umpire's decision reversed.
27. Academic dignitary.
28. Communion.
29. Studying eggs without logic.
30. Ministers to one of the senses.
32. Mongrel.
34. Read 9 thus.
35 *rev.* Vowels making for unity.
36. Name of peace.
38. Where are my men?
40. One of a wooden vessel's crew.
41. Takes high rank at Court.
43. Simplifies your problems.
44. Confusion in the Punjab.
45. Peacock's dance.
46 *rev.* Secret.
47. We are often the ninth power.

DOWN

1. Best method of admitting mistakes.
2. Joint hero (titular) of a famous satire.
3. Body of citizens whom it is very difficult to please.
4. Delicious with tar.
5. Twice turned.
6. The King can.
7 *rev.* Mignonette without her Papa.
8. Start for a Prime Minister.
9 *rev.* Keeps on approaching.
10. Home of the allegory.
11 *rev.* Tuneful though often lugubrious.
13. Strafford's policy.
14 *rev.* What I said to Sergeant Murphy.
19. Sedan chair.
20. I can be in this provender.
21. Without our armour.
26. Descent by pedigree.
28. Lately without a cent.
31, 17. "Ratty" and Co.
33. "All the way."
37 *rev.* Cicero's woe.
39. Odd even.
42. Irregular run.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD.—PUSSIES

ACROSS.—1. (cat)alectic. 8. (cat)alysis. 13. Salic. 14. Somerset. 16. true. 18. (cat)harist. 19. era. 20. air. 21. C.P.R. 22. drastic. 24. (Cat)onian *rev.* 26. ain *rev.* 28. educe. 31. Blotto. 32. admiral. 34. (cat)enary *rev.* 36. glaucoma. 38. æthrioscopic. 43. dastard. 44. Oenone. 46. (cat)erwaul. 47. (cat)optrics.

DOWN.—1. (cat)asta. 2. lariat. 3. rule *rev.* 4. (a)ci(d). 5. (cat)chpole—petty officer. 6. isar(sari). 7. cordial. 8. amir (Rima). 9. easel *rev.* 10. try *rev.* 11. Tess *rev.* 12. cats *rev.* 15. Erica. 17. nonce *rev.* 23. Cids *rev.* 24. noyade. 25. stati(c) *rev.* 26. N.B. 27. pos-ada *rev.* 29. urop (pour). 30. secale *rev.* 33. tecum *rev.* 35. rear. 36. girl. 37. mine(ed). 39. hta (hat). 40. rau(city). 41. Odo. 42. our(nor). 45. (t)oi.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR

THE BREAK IN STERLING—GOLD SHARES—GERMAN BONDS AND EQUITIES—ELECTRICITY STOCKS

THE peg was removed from sterling on Tuesday and by Wednesday morning the dollar rate was 3.36 as against 3.44 on Monday. The question is whether the Exchange Equalisation Account has come to an end through natural exhaustion. The Government has had to buy gold and dollars for the next instalment on the American debt, due on December 15, and at the same time has had to support sterling in the market against foreign speculators, who are " bears " of sterling to a man. Then there are the seasonal trade influences. Up to last week the sterling exchanges were comparatively stable. This was due largely to the influx of American money into the London discount market where rates are higher than in New York. Having regard to the discount of quarter cent on three months forward dollars, the American finance house found it profitable to transfer funds to London as long as Treasury Bill rates were above ¾ per cent. Moreover, the recent attack of nerves about the dollar, following upon Mr. Hoover's election speeches, had given a certain stimulus to the flow of funds from New York to London. At the moment the tables have been turned, London bill rates are a shade easier, the dollar is less suspected, and the pound is under observation by the foreign nerve specialists. The fall in sterling has naturally taken some of the gilt off the gilt-edged market, but unless the break becomes a slump it is not likely to cause a permanent set-back, seeing that a low rate of exchange prevents the natural flow of funds from London to markets where investment yields are higher.

* * *

If any investor is nervous about the fall in sterling he can insure himself against calamity by buying the shares of the South African gold producers. The Kaffir market has been booming and the general impression is that it is too late to follow the rise. Actually, although a substantial appreciation has been enjoyed by the leading shares, it has been no more than is required to relate share values to the new sterling price of gold. In June, 1931, the price of gold was 85s. per ounce. This week it was 120s., a rise of 41.2 per cent. The market values of South African gold shares should therefore have risen by this percentage. This is exactly what has happened, as the following table will show :—

	Price June, 1931.	Equivalent Sterling Price To-day.*	Present Price	Annual Dividend Rate %	S. African Dividend Yield %. £ s. d.	Sterling Dividend Yield %** £ s. d.
Crown Mines, 10/- ...	4 3/8	6 3/16	6 1/16	70	5 13 2	7 19 9
Geduld, £1	4	5 11/16	5	35	7 0 0	9 17 8
Government Areas, 5/-	1 1/4	2 3/16	2	90	11 5 0	15 17 8
New State Areas, £1 ...	2 3/16	3 1/16	3 1/4	20	6 3 1	8 13 9
Springs, £1	3 3/16	4 1/2	4 3/16	37½	7 19 0	11 4 5
Sub Nigel, 10/- ...	2 3/16	4 1/16	6 1/16	80	6 9 3	9 2 6

*Allowing for rise in sterling price of gold from 85/- to 120/- per oz.

** Allowing for corresponding increase in sterling dividends.

Note.—The approximate lives of the mines are as follows:—Crown 25 yrs., Geduld 20 yrs., Government Areas 15 yrs., New State Areas 22 yrs., Springs 20 yrs., Sub Nigel 30 yrs.

While the Kaffir market has discounted from the British point of view the rise in the sterling price of gold, it has not yet discounted the South African point of view, namely, the probability that South Africa will be forced to devalue her gold currency. Adherence to the gold standard has caused a severe slump in her agricultural and pastoral industries, so that gold-mining is more than ever the mainstay of the country. A devaluation of the South African £ would increase the life of the Rand, enable many shut mines to reopen and cause a number of new mines to be developed. Self-protection and self-interest will, I believe, compel South Africa to take the medicine of devaluation. Her Budget is out of balance and she cannot raise a loan in London while she remains on the gold standard. Devaluation means to the Rand a lowering of costs by a percentage nearly equal to the percentage of the devaluation. Working costs have already been reduced. The average for 1931 was 19s. 4d. per ton and in July, 1932, 18s. 9d. If devaluation were announced there would be such buying of gold mining shares from South Africa that the market would not merely blaze but crackle. This would be a good time to unload.

* * *

The coming World Economic Conference is going to have plenty of dirty linen to wash in public. According to Herr von Papen, in a speech on Sunday last, Germany intends to persuade the creditor nations at the Conference that they can only reckon upon the payment of German foreign debts if they are prepared to accept German goods in payment. I have more than once called the attention of the investor to the German Government's thinly veiled threat : " Lower your tariffs or we will default." It is not bluff : it is serious, because it is one of the few policies for which the von Papen Government can obtain the support of all parties—the Centre, the National Socialists, the Nationalists and perhaps even the Communists. German Government bonds do not, therefore, fall as yet in the category of investments. Nor is the position of the mark very encouraging. The directors of the Reichsbank informed the Government last week, I am told, that they could not guarantee the stability of the mark if the quota plan for agricultural imports were carried into effect. The plan has, happily, been dropped on the threat of the reprisals by Italy and Holland, but the Reichsbank directors would hardly have supported the industrialists in this bankers' ramp if they had not felt some misgivings about the mark. The decline in the German export trade and the Government's plan for the rediscounting of receipts for tax payments point the way to a currency inflation. If I were to have an investment in Germany I would prefer a domestic equity share rather than a Government external bond. A few of the leading German equities are given in the following table :—

	Capital Rm (millions).	Dividends %. 1930-31.	1931-32.	Price June 30.	Price Sept. 6.	Price Oct. 13.	Yield %
Berliner Kraft- and Licht A.G.... ...	160	10	10	90	109	114¼	9.8
Hamburg Elektriz. Werk	88	10	8½	77	106	97½	8.8
I.G. Farben-Industrie	850	12	7	88	107½	95½	7.3
Rheinische Braunkohle	72.9	10	10	167½	186xd	169	7.1

* * *

In the rush to acquire stocks outside the British Government market, offering higher yields than £3 7s.6d.per cent.,the ordinary shares of the electricity supply companies have been bought up to prices yielding about 4 per cent. Yet the fixed interest stocks of the Central Electricity Board, which have suffered from a foolish prejudice against the heavy expenditure on the national electrification scheme, are still yielding about £4 7s. 6d: per cent., as the following table will show :—

	Price.	Yield %. Flat. £ s. d.	To Redn. £ s. d
Central Electricity Board, 5%, 1950/70 ...	109¾	4 11 0	4 4 0
Central Electricity Board, 4½%, 1957/82 ...	105½ free	4 6 0	4 4 6

Ordinary Shares.	Price.	Last Financial Year. % Earned.	% Paid.	Yield %. £ s. d.
County of London Electric, £1	52/6	11 0	10 5	4 0 9
Midland Counties, £1	34/6xd.	8 3	7 9	4 1 2
North-Eastern Electric, £1	29/6	4 9	6 0	4 1 4
Yorkshire Electric Power, £1	40/3	13 2	8 0	3 19 6

It seems to me absurd that the first charge on the electricity supply industry should be rated less favourably than the equity shares of the operating companies. The revenues of the Central Electricity Board are derived from the sale of electricity in bulk to the big supply companies which have to pay a price under the Electricity Supply Act, 1926, sufficient to cover the interest and sinking funds on the stocks of the Board. Further, the Board can make a levy under Section 9 of the Act on the whole of the electricity supply industry in Great Britain of annual sums equal to the interest and sinking fund charges in respect of the money it has borrowed for the standardisation of frequency. Yet brokers still indulge in irresponsible talk about the grid being a white elephant and its keeper, the Central Electricity Board, marked out for bankruptcy.

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